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FROM THE
Subscription Fund
BEGUN IN 1858

NARRATIVE

OF

CAPTAIN JAMES FAWCKNER'S

TRAVELS ON THE COAST OF BENIN,

WEST AFRICA.

EDITED

BY A FRIEND OF THE CAPTAIN.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETOR, BY A. SCHLOSS,
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1837.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages contain the Narrative of CAPTAIN JAMES FAWCKNER'S sufferings and sojourn among the tribes of Western Africa, in 1825. The work is published by subscription, and will doubtless be interesting principally to his friends and the subscribers who have so kindly assisted in bringing it out.

To the public, however, it is presumed, the faithful account it contains of the manners and customs of those African tribes hitherto so little known; as well as the equally faithful description of that part of the globe which has been but little explored, will prove interesting and instructive.

The manuscript was prepared, from the original notes and papers, by a friend, more than two years since, without the most remote idea of its ever being published: the heavy calamity, however, which deprived Captain F. of the principal part of his property, suggested the idea of repairing his loss, in some measure, by publishing the M.S. which that individual had written solely for his own information and amusement; precisely in the form in which he left it, he sends it forth for the benefit of his respected friend.

EDITOR.

London, May 3d, 1837.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Narrative commences from the 28th of June, 1825, (the period of my leaving Badagry,) but it will be necessary perhaps to inform the reader, that for some time previous to this I had been engaged on the coast of Africa. I therefore subjoin a brief account of what transpired from the period of my leaving England up to the time of the commencement of the Narrative, the loss of the ship, &c.

After leaving England, the vessel I had the command of, the "Nymph," was frozen up in Amsterdam for three months; at length we sailed with a cargo of general goods for the Cape of Good Hope.

We had proceeded on our voyage as far as eight degrees north of the equator, and were

one day busily engaged in saving rain water, which fell very copiously, when a most violent tornado burst on us, and in a moment the vessel was laid on her beam ends. Fortunately for us the topmasts and yards gave way and the ship righted. We found, however, she had sprung a leak, and was making about three feet water every hour. We were at least 600 miles from the nearest shore, but determined on making our way back to St. Jagoes as well as we could. We arrived, but found it impossible to repair the injury, and therefore abandoned the vessel.

The governor kindly gave me a passage in his yacht, to the island of Bonavista, and on my arrival I met with a Mr. Waterman a merchant, who offered me the command of a schooner which was about sailing for Sierra Leone. Having a great dread of that coast, and wishing to return to England, I refused, especially as I heard of a vessel at St. Mary's, which was bound for Liverpool. I went, therefore, to enquire about her, but to my great

disappointment found she had sailed two days.

I was not long here before I was taken ill in the fever, which confined me twenty days: the doctor who attended me, poor fellow, died from it, but I recovered. I remained some time in hope of an opportunity of getting back to England, but at length I began to be tired, and as my purse was getting low, I determined on waiting on Mr. Waterman, the merchant, and take the first thing that offered. He was very kind to me, but said he had now appointed a captain to the vessel he previously offered me the command of, but if I felt disposed to go as mate, he would give me good wages: seeing no prospect of any thing better, I accepted.

We sailed for Sierra Leone, and took dispatches for Sir Charles Macarthy; who was commander of the forces at Cape Coast. On our arrival, however, we learned he had been killed, with many others of his brave companions, by the Ashantees. Our vessel

was retained to carry dispatches along the coast, and I was employed to take one hundred soldiers to aid the government frigate, "Owen Glendower," in besieging and destroying the town of Cormantin.

After a lapse of six months we returned to Sierra Leone, and I was appointed captain of the Henry. I again sailed for Cape Coast, and was engaged to purchase and supply the troops with cattle. I proceeded on to Accarah, and took, as passengers, the former governor of Cape Coast Castle and his child. Here I had the honour of dining with three governors, the British, Danish, and Dutch, in less than a fortnight after, (as will be seen in a few pages.) I was destitute of every thing, and among savages. I took leave of the governors and sailed for Badagry, where on my arrival the vessel was stored with various goods.

NARRATIVE, &c.

CHAPTER I.

On the 28th of June, 1825, I sailed from Badagry, in the schooner "Henry," of Sierra Leone, with a cargo of various goods, to purchase palm-oil and ivory from the natives of Benin, on the Rio Formosa. My crew consisted of a supercargo, mate, trademan, and cooper, with four natives of Sierra Leone, one Portuguese, and four Kroomen. Having passed Lagos, we continued on our passage till noon on the following day, (29th,) when the wind blowing fresh from the S.W. with thick weather and heavy rain, we hove-to, fearing to overshoot our port which I concluded could not be far distant. Shortly after, however, the weather cleared up, and we saw the land to the N.N.E., about four miles distant; when, having sounded and found it nine fathoms water, with a muddy

ground, we bore up and made sail. Soon after this, perceiving the water to be discoloured, and encountering a considerable surf, we again sounded, and were surprised to find it only two and a quarter fathoms; the more so, as I had consulted my chart and found it marked "four fathoms of water;" not the least mention being made of any shoals at this part of the coast.

The wind at this time, was to the S.S.W., and our course S.E. by E. along the shore, so that we could not get the vessel much off the land; but by persevering in keeping close to the wind, we succeeded at length in getting her into three fathoms and a half, at 6, P.M., when we anchored.

On the succeeding morning, June 30th, we again got under weigh, and ran down parallel with the land with a S.W. wind, when we fancied we saw the entrance of the river Benin on our lee-bow, but were deceived; and on sounding were much astonished to find the water had again shoaled to two fathoms and a quarter, and still kept decreasing. We endeavoured, as before, to keep her as close to the wind as possible; but as it was blowing strong, and the surf running very high, the vessel being

light, necessarily drifted toward the land; our only alternative therefore was at once to run on shore, or come to an anchor. We of course chose the latter without delay, and let go both our anchors. At midnight, finding a quantity of water in the hold, as the sea made a clear passage over us, we resolutely set to work at the pumps; but

"Misfortunes come not as single spies;"

for no sooner had we begun, than the pumps were choked, the boxes broken, and we had no others to use in their stead. We then commenced baling out of the lazaret, which, although a tedious and slow way, we were obliged to persist in, until she was sufficiently relieved; when a strong current having made to the westward, which threw her athwart the sea, we decided on hoisting the mainsail in order to keep her to the wind. About four o'clock the next morning, July 1st, the wind blew from the land, and we began to get up our anchors, and set all sail, hoping to get off. However, to our great disappointment, we found that the vessel could not make any headway against the heavy surf

that was running, and, in fact, was rapidly drifting ashore. We were therefore obliged to bring up again; and now our anchors would not hold, but still drifting toward the shore, at 1, P. M., she struck abaft and unshipped the rudder. We contrived to get a rope rove through the head, and hoisted it up alongside, but all hope of getting off now entirely disappeared; and continuing to drift in at 5, P. M., she finally grounded in the mud, with her head toward the sea. The natives on the coast came down to the water, and made signs with their clothes for us to come on shore; but this we declined, being much tired with our exertions of baling and watching. About 6, P.M., some of them came on board, and pretended great friendship for us. From one of the crew, who was a native of Benin, and had been made a slave by the Brazilians, we ascertained, that the place on which we were driven, was Mongyee, a province belonging to the king of Benin, about fifteen or twenty miles west of Benin Bar, and that the natives were engaged there in the manufacturing of salt. The vessel lay all night without receiving the least damage, as the ground was very soft. On the

following morning it was agreed that the supercargo, his assistant, mate, and part of the crew, should go on shore, and if possible make arrangements with the chief for conveying the cargo to the city of Benin. About nine o'clock they returned, and informed me that the chief had behaved very kindly to them, and offered one of their houses for a warehouse, and would get the property removed to Benin as soon as possible; advising that it should be conveyed on shore without delay. One of the chiefs came on board, as we imagined, to protect the property. He was dressed in an old blue jacket, with a cloth tied around his loins; his head was covered with coral beads, thickly strung on his black curly wool, which flowed out from underneath an old brown slouched hat; his neck, ancles, and wrists, were also encircled with a profusion of strings of coral. Some of the natives who had come with him, had a single string round their necks, but the quantity he displayed, joined to the air of imaginary dignity he manifested, as he strutted up and down the deck, left no doubt on our minds that he was of a superior grade to those who accompanied him.

We immediately commenced discharging the cargo, which consisted principally of iron bars; but found that as soon as we put them over the side that the thieves ran away with them; and out of forty bars, only four of them arrived at the warehouse on shore. A trunk of valuable clothes was also sent with them; but on the way it was opened, and plundered of its contents. We therefore deferred discharging any more till a better opportunity might offer.

Things now began to assume a dismal aspect, and I feared it was more than probable the natives would make an attempt on the ship, and also on our persons during the night; as soon therefore as they left the vessel, we loaded six muskets with slugs, and made the best preparations we could to protect our lives and property. About five, we saw a great number of men come down near the vessel, all armed with weapons, accompanied by the same old villain of a chief. When on board I had lent him my sword to keep off the thieves, and on leaving he took it away with him. I could now plainly perceive him parading up and down with it on shore, his men drawn up, and he apparently exercising them. No

captain strutting at the head of his corps ever assumed half as much importance as did this old rogue in his blue jacket, slouched hat, and ornaments of coral, as he paced backwards and forwards, displaying the most uncouth gesticulations, and dazzling the eyes of his awkward troop with my polished blade. Much, however, as we were amused at seeing them, we were not without apprehension as to their intentions toward us; but at this time the tide was up, which effectually prevented their coming on board, however they might have wished it. When it was high water we succeeded in heaving the vessel off the shore a little by her best bower anchor, which had held fast, and kept her head to the surf from the moment she first struck; and could we have managed to get her out so far, that when it was low water the tide might surround her, we might have eventually got off, or at least prevented the natives from boarding us; but this could not be effected, not having a boat with which we could run on another anchor. The supercargo, who went on shore with others of the crew, came down near the vessel, when a number of the natives surrounded him, as if they wished to communicate something, and one of the rascals had the audacity to

steal his hat from off his head. We could have shot the fellow with the greatest ease, but forbore, as we feared the natives might in revenge cut our people on shore to pieces.

In the evening they sent on board for some rum to give the chiefs, and requested a few cutlasses to guard the property; but both were taken away as soon as landed, and all the property in the warehouse torn from them by force, their lives being in danger had they attempted to make the least resistance. In this dreadful state of suspense, not knowing how matters would end, they spent the night in a most miserable apartment, up to their ancles in mud, with no other food than Indian corn, although we had sent them plenty of meat, which the thieves invariably stole as soon as it arrived on shore. On board we were all on the watch, fearing they might come in the night and murder us in our beds; and we were not wrong in our surmises; for during the night they made three attempts, but we succeeded in driving them away by our continued noise and shouting.

In the morning as soon as day dawned, we perceived a number of men on the strand, with four

canoes ready to launch as soon as the tide should fall away. It was not long before they came off, and with them the old chief, who had now a loaded pistol in his hand, which we conceived was for his own protection when he came on board. A great number of those who were with him attempted to follow, but I prevailed on him to keep them off for a short time. They, however, gradually stole on us, one by one, and the decks were soon filled. They were then ordered to sit down, which they did for about an hour; when, on some private signal being made, they simultaneously rose, and began to plunder various small articles about the decks. We now clearly saw their base designs, and looked anxiously toward the shore for our people, to whom I had written the preceding night to come on board immediately, as I feared the ship would be taken from us; but no chance now appeared of their being able to render us any assistance, and we made up our minds for the worst.

The Chief, who observed my expressions of anger at this promiscuous pilfering, beckoned to me, to place the things in the cabin, and sit

down before the entrance to protect them, saying at the same time, "Teef man, teef man, Cappee." This I saw was a mere scheme to place me in such a position, that they might the more easily fall on and pinion me. I was at a loss how to act, and felt that unless immediate assistance were afforded, we should soon be compelled to surrender, or perish in attempting to defend ourselves. At this moment I looked toward the shore, and saw the supercargo, mate, and crew, coming down the beach, but instead of being able to render us any assistance, I discovered that they themselves were prisoners and under a strong guard. This seemed the signal of action to those on board, for immediately the ruthless barbarians fell upon us, bound us hand and foot, and with a halter around each of our necks we were thrown down on the deck, stripped of our clothes, and of every article on our persons, even to the knives which our men used to suspend from their necks, whilst a fierce wretch stood over us with an axe ready to kill us if we made any resistance.

The vessel was now full of men, all busily engaged in the work of plunder and destruction. Some were cutting the ring-bolts out of the deck,

which they did with singular dexterity; whilst others were plundering the cargo and dividing the spoil On discovering a few kegs of powder and a number of muskets, their joy exceeded all bounds; and, for a moment, they stood still, and raised one simultaneous yell, or shout, to express their satisfaction and delight. The noise rang through our ears, and gave a very sensible idea of an African war-whoop. A heart-stirring one it certainly was to me; it echoed through the woods on shore, which reverberated back the sound as if it were the reply of the inhabitants of the coast to their fortunate brethren on board.

One of our men, on hearing the noise, immediately jumped over board, and ran away to the crew ashore; but only increased their terror, by giving them to understand that I and all that remained on board were murdered.

The savages did not long remain inactive over their booty; a general scramble ensued for the muskets and powder; and as there was not enough to supply all of them, and each was desirous to secure to himself as much as possible, no sooner had one been so fortunate as to obtain a musket, than he

was dispossessed of it by another; iron bars which they had taken, served also as offensive and defensive weapons; and in the midst of all this riot, confusion, and noise, I was lashed to the deck, fearing every moment that my brains would be knocked out by the barbarians who were fighting over me.

Another party discovered a few small looking-glasses; and, if possible, these excited more attention than the muskets; and in their eager attempts to get them, that each might "hold the mirror up to nature," they literally broke them in a thousand pieces about the deck.

All this time we were bound so tight about our necks that the cords nearly strangled us; the sun shone most fervently on my head and distressed me greatly, causing an intolerable burning, languor, and thirst. They had stripped me of my clothes, and taken away my hat, so that I was completely exposed to the burning rays of a tropical sun. At a little distance from me on the deck was a small wash tub; I made several ineffectual attempts to get it on my head, and at length by dint of exertion and accommodating my head to it, I got it

fairly on. The pleasure I felt at my success, I can hardly describe; such a *hat* was never seen before; the shade, however, it afforded to my burning temples was peculiarly grateful, and all thoughts of appearance were now swallowed up in that great law of nature, self-preservation.

In this state I lay for two hours, while the natives deliberately cut the vessel, with her sails and rigging, to pieces. They manifested a strong desire for iron work, which appeared more valuable to them than gold. The vessel abounded in small ring bolts;* these they would cut with remarkable facility from the hard Brazil wood, with only a common axe.

A ray of hope at length seemed to dawn upon us. Faint indeed it was, but we hailed it as the harbinger of a better and brighter day, and like the drowning man who grasps a straw, we clung to it in our present miserable condition. A man who could speak a little English came on board. Whether his slight acquaintance with the language had instilled more of the "milk of human kind-

* She was once a slave ship, and these rings were used in chaining the slaves.

ness," into his breast than was common to the savages, I know not; but it was evident that he possessed it, from some cause, in a pleasing degree, and seemed to sympathise with us in our dreadful condition. We prevailed on him to loosen our bandages, which he did, and allowed me to sit up on a stool, which I felt at the time to be a very great luxury, especially as it afforded me an opportunity of seeing that portion of my crew on shore. They had been down several times very near the vessel, but were prohibited from coming on board. This man also went to the chief to enquire if we might go ashore; the reply to which was, that we should, but that he did not know whether our heads would not be taken off as soon as we arrived.

The posture in which my friend had placed me, allowed me to see that all around me was a wreck. They had completely rifled the cargo, and the old chief had taken all my property to himself, excepting only what he deemed to be of no service to him, viz., my books, charts, &c., which he had thrown overboard. Seeing one of the men cutting up the mainsail I begged him to give me a piece of it to cover myself, being quite naked; and also another

piece to wrap round my head, for I could not well keep on my wooden hat, as it was not only too large, but I began to suffer inconvenience from its weight. I thought, therefore, I might do better with a piece of sail cloth, and manufacture something in the shape of a cap. With a great deal of reluctance he at length consented to give me a small portion of it, and very soon I attired myself as well as I could in my grotesque dress. Soon after this the men were unloosed, and we prepared to go on shore, by dropping off from the main boom on the ground, which was a soft bed of mud; and tugging along on our hands and knees through it, we at length succeeded in reaching dry land, being exceedingly tired with the exertion after the cruel treatment we had experienced on board for so many hours. When I reached the shore I looked back to see my late gallant bark, where she lay divested of all her beauty, the rigging cut away, and the masts ready to fall. She that had so lately spread her sails to the gale, courted the breeze, and been kissed by the sportive ripples as they passed, was now a lone desolate thing on a barbarian shore. How well the descriptive lines of the

poet accorded with the scene of devastation and spoil,

Behold yon black and batter'd hulk,
That slumbers o'er the tide;
There is no sound from stem to stern,
For they had pluck'd her pride.

The masts are down, the cannons mute,
She shows nor sheet nor sail;
Nor starts forth with the seaward breeze,
Nor answers shout nor hail.

Her merry men with all their mirth,
Have sought some other shore;
And she with all her glory on
Shall rule the sea no more.

CHAPTER II.

FROM the contemplation of the wreck of my vessel, I naturally turned to the wreck of my fortune. I knew not whither I was going, or what my fate might be on a foreign and inhospitable shore, subject doubly to every privation and danger. I gave one last look at the "Henry," and turned my eyes toward shore, where I saw the supercargo and the rest of the crew, who were awaiting our arrival. We were soon with them, and tears of mutual affection and joy flowed down our cheeks; for we then esteemed it a happiness to have the prospect of dying together. The curious appearance I made in my new dress, however, caused a momentary smile; for never, since the days of Robinson Crusoe, was a human being so strangely or roughly habited. Before me marched the old chief

with a sword, and another addition to the list of articles before mentioned, viz., a flute. This he had discovered on board, but not knowing the precise use of it, perhaps he thought it of extraordinary value, and accordingly he had taken peculiar care of it, and was strutting before me with it under his arm.

Proceeding onwards we soon arrived at their huts, but were not allowed to enter.

Here we remained for some hours, whilst they held a consultation as to what should be done with us. Exposed as I was to the scorching rays of the sun, my neck began to get very sore and painful. I determined therefore to ask the old chief for one of my shirts. I did so; but what was my grief in approaching his house to behold all my clothes hung out to dry, as if entirely appropriated; and on enquiring for him was immediately ordered back to the place from whence I came. This indeed made my heart ache, but there was no alternative. I returned to my companions with a sorrowful countenance and received comfort in their sympathy under my disappointment and distress.

Whilst I was brooding over my misfortunes and receiving their consolations, we saw the old chief approaching; he came to me, and had somewhat relented, for he actually was liberal enough to bring with him a shirt and an old pair of trousers.

This unexpected liberality not only raised my spirits, but was welcomed by us all, for we considered this circumstance as a good omen; inferring from it, that had it been their intention to kill us, they would hardly have brought such means of accommodation.

We were then ordered by him to go into the same hut that had been used as a store-house for our property. Here we spent the night in a very uncomfortable manner, not having sufficient room to lie down; and the swarms of musquitoes which infested the place were a constant source of annoyance. A thought of making our escape suggested itself for a moment, but we soon saw the utter impracticability of such a thing, as the country was quite inundated, and we were total strangers in it.

About midnight we were much alarmed at hearing the chiefs and others making a great noise.

They had been making free with some rum which had been brought from the vessel. Our fear was, that in their state of inebriation, they would come and murder us; but, thank God, they did not come near us, and we were relieved from our alarm at dawn of day.

In the course of the morning we sent to the chief, and begged he would forthwith send us away, as we feared we should get sick and die there. He returned answer that we should be sent away soon; but his subsequent conduct gave us to fear to the contrary, and that we should be detained many days.

The chiefs held several meetings and consultations together to determine our fate: the principal object, it appeared, was to make slaves of the blacks belonging to the crew, which, however, they feared to do, as they were free men. Several times the chiefs called to see us, and their whole attention seemed to be fixed on those men, who were fine athletic fellows, and doubtless would have been a prize, could they have made slaves of them. Repeated assurances were made that we should be soon sent away; and they further stated

that a large canoe was being built to convey us to Benin.

During our stay we were much amused with the superstitious fears of the old chief, who at different times returned several of our books, as he feared to open them, conceiving they were fetish, or charms.

On one occasion he brought a large folio bible belonging to the supercargo, which had given him great uneasiness and disquiet of mind; he therefore thought it advisable at once to get rid of it; and, dressed in my jacket, with one of my nightcaps under his hat, this curious old fellow came to us with the great volume under his arm; several of the natives accompanied him, who had all come to the conclusion that it was the white man's fetish. We were willing to take advantage of their fear; and holding the sacred volume in one hand, I pointed with the other to the sky, telling them, at the same time, it was God's book. They seemed much impressed, if we might judge from their countenances, as they withdrew at a respectful distance from it, but their awe soon subsided into amazement and surprise, when we opened

the book and began shewing them the pictures it contained. They then looked over our shoulders, and seemed highly pleased, as we turned over the leaves, not daring to touch it all the time.

After we had gone through the whole, our group of blacks, who had formed a thick hedge of woolly heads around us, with a continued smile upon their black visages, and a line of grinning mouths, white teeth, and thick lips on every side, began to disperse. At last all drew off, and left us again to ourselves. It was a great source of merriment to us, although in such a miserable condition, and possessed of so small a wardrobe, to witness the pride the chief took in dressing himself in our old clothes, and the various attempts he made to deceive us; for there seemed something of English spirit in him, being exceedingly tenacious of his honour and integrity. He made many ludicrous attempts to convince us the dress was his own. Sometimes he changed and varied them, wearing a dress composed partly from my wardrobe, and partly from that of the supercargo; but what pleased us most was to see him strutting about one day with my best surtout,

the first time he had sported it; and without doubt he thought, he should effectually deceive me by the collar being turned up.

The population of the town of Mongyee, I should suppose to be about three hundred, and the houses about thirty. They are built upon a piece of ground surrounded by water and beds of long rushes, and standing on an elevation of about three feet from the level of the water. The huts are square, and formed like wicker work, of branches of the bamboo; the foliage prevents the rain from beating in. The door is formed of bamboo sticks woven close together like hurdles, and is hung to the side posts by a slip of tough wood, which serves the purpose of hinges.

Although the town itself is small, yet there are a great many huts scattered about in the bush, or woods, and from the number of men that beset the vessel, and whom we subsequently saw passing along the coast, I conclude there must be many such villages in the neighbourhood.

I did not see the process of making salt, but remarked a quantity of baskets formed from the rind of the bamboo, which were suspended over earthen

vessels, or calabashes. They contained sand and dirty water, which filtered through into the calabash below. I concluded from this that they were not able to get pure salt water; as the water near the shore, in consequence of the constant surf, becomes very foul and muddy.

The women appear to be very clever at weaving, by the hand, mats of a fibrous wood; and appropriate the bamboo tree to a variety of uses. If this tree be tapped at the head, and a jar applied, it yields the bamboo wine; a very pleasing drink, similar to our English ginger beer. The branches serve to build their huts, the rind to tie them together instead of nails, and the leaves furnish an excellent covering for the roof. In fact there is no part but what is devoted to some useful purpose.

Two governors preside over the town; the one our disinterested old friend who has been so often mentioned before; the other a venerable old man who, from his appearance, and the grey wool on his head, I should conceive to be above four-score. This hoary-headed old sinner received the stolen property from the ship, whilst the other was play-

ing his part as thief on board. They appeared to have great command and authority over the natives, who, before they have any conversation with them, fall down on their knees, with their hands in a praying position, continuing to rub them one against another till they deign to return a favourable answer, or command them to rise.

CHAPTER III.

On the eighth day of our stay at Mongyee, we were told the canoe was ready, and that the governors intended to convey us to Gatto, that being the trade town to Benin. About nine o'clock I embarked with the supercargo, clerk, and cooper, besides two boys to pole the canoe, and the man who had loosened our bandages in the ship. The rest of the crew were to follow us, and for the present we took leave of each other, and proceeded for the town of Yarcella.

After poling the canoe for the distance of about two miles through the reeds or long grass which surrounded the town of Mongyee, (the appearance of which is very picturesque, and may be compared to sailing through a beautiful field of corn), we emerged into an extensive wood, composed of trees

of the most luxuriant growth and varied foliage. Not a spot of dry ground was any where visible. As far as the eye could stretch through the long vista of trees one calm sheet of water extended its unruffled silvery surface, unstirred, save when the gold fish that now and then leaped from its bosom formed a series of wide spreading rings from the spot so disturbed; or the bird that skimmed lightly over it in search of food. It was indeed a delightful spot, and we felt it to be so; although our lives, to all human appearance, were suspended by a slender thread, liable to be divided in a moment by the caprice of those by whom we were attended. We could not, however, be blind or insensible, whilst surrounded with so much to admire and interest us, as the canoe proceeded, propelled by the two boys with their long poles;—sometimes through a long avenue of trees, the tops of which had entwined themselves together, and formed a canopy over our heads, where birds of most delightful plumage and of sweetest note hopped from twig to twig, enjoying occasional shelter from the noontide ray which this umbrageous retreat afforded. At times the canoe pursued a zig zag course through the trees,

often passing between the roots of others, which grew considerably above the surface, and meeting together, formed the trunk. Through this archway we glided till we arrived at another, or a series of them, some very lofty and forming a perfect gothic arch reared by nature's hands; others irregular, and so low as to oblige us to lie down in the canoe whilst we passed under them. In this manner we travelled on for several hours, threading the natural and picturesque maze, till we arrived at a sort of half-way house, built on a little spot of dry land; where, to our great surprise, we found the old chief, with my cabin boy, whom he had brought with him from Yarcella, he having come by some other, and probably a nearer route.

Having taken a fresh supply of Indian corn, we again embarked, and proceeded on towards Yarcella.

The approach to this place is very picturesque. A row of stupendous palm trees, with the huts of the natives scattered between them, marks the entrance to the town, and the landing place. There we arrived about four o'clock in the afternoon, and were honoured by a visit from a great number of

the natives, who came down to the water to see us. We could not conceive how they should have known that we were coming, till we found that the crew of the other canoe had arrived before us, and given notice of our approach.

We were ordered into a small hut, and some bamboo wine was brought to refresh and cheer us. It is by no means an unpleasant beverage, and produces intoxication like other wines if taken to excess. It ferments quickly, but will not keep longer than twelve hours; the Portuguese often employ it as a yeast in making their bread.

In the evening, according to the custom of the country, we sent a handkerchief to the governor to announce our arrival, and requested an audience. This was soon granted, and we were conducted to his house. We found him in a square court, or yard, seated on a bench; he was an old man, and wore a long robe, ornamented with a profusion of couries, small shells used by them as money. Beside him was seated the old chief of Mongyee, apparently enjoying the honour conferred on him in being placed by the side of a greater and more powerful ruler.

As we advanced toward them, our humane friend, who accompanied us as linguist, suggested that we should prostrate ourselves before them, according to the usage of the country. The thought was humiliating enough, but for the sake of expediency we conformed to the custom, and dropped on our knees before the throne of these sable personages. We were then ordered to rise and seat ourselves on a long stool, whilst they descended and presented each of us with a red goora nut as a token of friendship. In addition to the humiliating act we had just performed, we found it necessary for our safety to speak *well* of the man who had robbed us of all our property, and who had been the means of bringing us into the country in the destitute state in which we then presented ourselves before the governor. After gazing at us for some time they ordered us to withdraw and return to our hut.

Shortly after our arrival we received some yams, Indian corn, and plantains. This cheered us a little, and we began to eat, and endeavoured to be as happy as our circumstances would admit.

In the course of the evening we saw the old

chief, (I can give him no other name or title,) and prevailed on him to give us back the flute which he had taken from the ship, conceiving that we might work on the feelings of the natives by it, and at the same time amuse ourselves. We were not deceived; for as soon as it was played, numbers of people came round us, attracted by the novelty of its tone, and each one in his turn looked eagerly up at the bore at the end, to see, as they said, "the tunes come out." Our compass had been preserved, and it excited a great deal of attention also. They could not imagine how the card acted and twisted, and turned the box round every way to see if it was not buoyed up with water.

Our fame rapidly spread abroad, and the story of the flute and compass attracted great numbers to the spot, most of whom brought us provisions. They seemed, however, to fear us greatly; for if we attempted to move they would start back as if some venomous beast was before them.

We slept during the night on a bed formed of bamboos placed close together, and covered with country cloth; from the fatigue we had experienced, by our long confinement in the canoes, we enjoyed

our rest, and our repose was sweet and uninterrupted.

In the morning we rose and took a walk in the town, which is situated on an island, and is doubtless a place of note in the country. It is far superior to Mongyee, and I should suppose contained about a thousand inhabitants. There are several chiefs, all of whom wear a quantity of coral, and seem to have great authority and command over the inhabitants, who, whether male or female, never pass by without first falling on their hands and knees before them.

We approached their houses, which are all built together, forming an oblong square, at the head of which stands the fetish hut. The walls of this building are of clay, and are covered in with rafters, across which branches of bamboo are laid and tied down. There are no windows, but an aperture in the middle of the roof serves to let in the light, under which stands a cistern or tank, which conveys the rain away through holes into the ground. Round it is a walk about three feet wide, where the people dance to the sound of their drums; and he who can make the most

grotesque figure, and play the most laughable pranks, is held in highest esteem by the spectators.

In the centre is a bench formed of brown clay, which, by frequent rubbing with a piece of cocoa-nut shell and wet cloths, has received a polish, and when dry looks like marble. Here is placed the fetish; there is a young tree beside it stripped of all its foliage, and at the foot an earthen pot containing skeletons of animals, crooked sticks, and such unseemly trifles, which the people ignorantly and superstitiously venerate and worship.

As we were walking about we were met by some of the chiefs, who took notice of us, with seeming kindness. One of them invited us to his house, and requested, as a favour, that we would bring the flute: accordingly the supercargo, clerk, and myself, accepted the invitation, and went carrying with us the far-famed flute, which excited more attention than all of us put together. We found him waiting to receive us, dressed in an old fashioned coat extravagantly ornamented with lace, a cloth of very fine texture encircling his loins. We had not been long in the house when refresh-

ments were set before us, consisting of a boiled fowl and some yams, which were served up in a wash-hand basin; and for spoons we had some shells. Fearing there might be poison in the dish, we requested the chief to eat with us, which he readily consented to do. In order to prove that there was nothing injurious in the food he took up a leg of fowl, and having sucked it, replaced it in the dish. At any other time this might have proved an unsavoury morsel, but now we found indeed that "hunger is good sauce;" we therefore all ate from it heartily.

Our host was very impatient to hear the flute, and requested the accompaniment of our voices also. We consented, but previous to our commencing, each drank a very fair share of palm wine, which had been set before us purposely to "whet our whistles."

After finishing our meal, and having "taken our wine," we struck up "Rule Britannia," although by no means in accordance with our situation, nor with our feelings at this moment; yet we managed to get on very well, till we came to the line, "And Britons never never will be slaves."

Let the reader imagine our feelings!—Indeed I was surprised that we had been so injudicious as to select a song containing sentiments so much at variance with our condition at that moment. However, we proceeded, and finished, much to the amusement and gratification of our host.

Our time, for several days following, was fully taken up in visiting the different chiefs, all of whom were exceedingly anxious that we should come and amuse them with our singing and the flute. And as Goldsmith when he travelled on the continent, and approached a village, invariably took out his German flute, and played one of his merriest tunes, is said never to have found it fail in procuring him a night's lodging, or filling his belly when he was hungry, so we found that our little knowledge of music procured us many a kind attention and refreshing meal.

Some of the people who came to see us, intimated that something was at once going to be done with us "white men," and the blacks were to be made slaves of. This alarmed us greatly, and the more so as we could not ascertain the truth of the report, or what punishment was intended for us.

All we could gather was from the clerk, who understood their language very imperfectly. Moreover the guard who had the care of us seemed very much agitated in his sleep, as if his conscience was burthened with something respecting us. In fact, every thing seemed to portend the approach of some dreadful termination of our present misery.

It happened at this time that the governor's son died, and there were great preparations for his funeral. A large hall was hung with the most superb cloths of the country, like tapestry, and in the middle of the apartment was a quantity of bowls, containing "fu-fu," a sort of dumpling, made of pounded yams. This "fu-fu" they eat with a rich soup made from the fore legs of monkeys, and occasionally with fish. It is esteemed by them a dainty dish; but being so highly seasoned with their strong pepper few Europeans can touch it.

At night a number of people repaired to the hall, and made a great noise. The drums began to beat, and we feared we should be sacrificed at once to the shade of the departed youth. Determined, however, to sell our lives as dearly as possible, each armed himself with a bamboo stick: to

escape was impossible, as we were on an island, and surrounded on all sides with dangers and difficulties; we therefore laid down on our beds with our arms near us, in case we should have occasion to use them. We had not been long in bed before we were aroused by one of them crying out, "they will murder us all;" in an instant we all sprang from our beds, and caught hold of our guard, who had accompanied us from Mongyee, craving his protection, or vowing he should share our fate, whatever it might be. We clung to him like sinking mariners, whilst he stood as if transfixed with horror. He did not speak or utter a syllable, although among us the most death-like silence prevailed; but we felt the flesh on his arms and body quiver, and the hard beating of his heart told the anguish which prevailed there was ominous of the fate of the unhappy beings who were in his custody.

In this state we remained anxiously awaiting our fate: but finding no one entered the apartment, we began to relax the firm gripe we had on our terror-stricken guard, and to seek for an explanation of the cause of the disturbances.

Fortunately for us it was a false alarm: one of the natives had been sent (doubtless from some bad motive) to see if we were on the watch. Having penetrated into the apartment where some of our men slept, he saw a water-jar, which he took a fancy too, and was about to decamp with it, when the noise he made awoke one of them, who jumped out of bed immediately, pursued the thief, and struck him a blow, which so staggered him, that he dropped the jar, and made his escape as fast as his legs would carry him.

The others waking at the noise caused by the pursuit, thought the house was beset, and immediately one scene of bustle commenced, and the first impression was that they were all about to be murdered. This caused them to cry out in the manner which so alarmed us in the other room.

We were happy it was no worse, but it completely spoiled our rest for the remainder of the night. The only relief to our anxious minds, was the dawn of day, which we hailed with unusual pleasure and delight.

CHAPTER IV.

For eight successive nights we lay down, not knowing that we should ever rise again; no faith was to be placed in these people, and the fear which our guard so often betrayed, convinced us there was some dreadful secret respecting us, lodged within that bosom, which had beaten with such violence on the night of adventure before mentioned.

On the morning of the ninth day we received a supply of Indian corn and plantains for our journey, and about eight o'clock we took our departure from Yarcella. A large canoe, laden with salt, awaited our arrival at the banks of the river, and accompanied by several natives bearing blunderbusses, muskets, and swords, we proceeded through the rushes by poling as before. At some little distance from the shore they discharged their

pieces by way of salute, and immediately reloaded them.

We had not proceeded far through the thick bed of rushes, before we opened into a beautiful river. The sudden transition from the bed of reeds and grass, to the extensive prospect we now enjoyed, was truly enchanting, and seemed more like a fairy land than the country of faithless savages.

The difference in respect of scenery, to what we witnessed before, was remarkably beautiful. Here the river rolled majestically on, and extended its clear surface as far as the eye could reach, without being incumbered and shaded with the trees and dense masses of foliage, which we observed in our first day's journey. The sun was already high in the heavens, and its rays shot fervently down on our uncovered heads. The poles had been laid aside, and our men occasionally assisted at the paddles, urging the canoe on at a rapid rate.

Having proceeded for some miles in this way, we arrived at a small branch of the river, where a thick row of trees had mutually entwined their top branches together, and formed a long shady alcove. In this delightful retreat, which was immediately

chosen by the master of the canoe, we were to breakfast, and giving orders to the men at once to prepare the meal, the boat was moored to one of the trees, and we breakfasted off Indian corn.

During our simple repast, the canoe men were busily engaged in forming an awning over the boat, to protect us during the journey from the effects of sun and rain. This they accomplished, by elevating rods of bamboo in a perpendicular position, and covering them with the matting made of the fibrous wood, which effectually prevented the wet from penetrating, and at the same time sheltered us from the burning rays of the sun.

As soon as these necessary precautions had been completed, we again set forward on our journey, proceeding up the main branch of the river. On either hand the margin was bounded by lofty trees, the growth and foliage of which surpassed, in beauty and variety, all we had seen before. The stupendous oak of the growth of centuries, with its extended arms and colossal trunk, around which climbed the various tendrils of the forest, stood prominent on the banks, and threw its broad sha-

dow across the stream. Beside it the stately palm shot up its tall stem and tufted top, whilst between them, here and there, might be seen the wild pine apple, of more humble stature indeed, but not less beautiful. Plants and flowers of all kinds and every class, pencilled by nature's hand, of glowing colours and delicious fragrance, studded the ground. Nor did inanimate nature alone furnish objects to interest our attention: as we proceeded on, we saw numberless monkeys sportively leaping from tree to tree, and gamboling together, unconscious or careless of our presence. Birds, whose plumage emulated the colours of the rainbow, perched on the branches, which spread over the stream, and filled the air with charming melody. The parrot and trumpet bird, with their full note, joined in the chorus; the latter especially well deserving the name it bears, as its ample and full tuned throat sends forth a sound so nearly allied to the tone of the well known instrument from which it receives its name All nature, animate and inanimate, contributed largely to render the country through which we were passing a sort of paradise. Here the fancy of the poet might have revelled in delight, and the

pencil of the artist transferred to the canvass some of nature's fairest landscapes. The morning was beautiful and every thing around luxuriant, wild, and glorious.

Proceeding onwards we arrived at a little spot of dry ground, and met a canoe coming out of the bush. The natives who were in it had just shot a wild pig on this little island, and offered to sell a portion of it to our crew. This they readily accepted. It was boiled, and we made a hearty meal of it, the flavour nearly resembling boiled beef. As the shades of evening began to draw in we could plainly hear the roaring of tigers, with their young, and the savage bark of the fierce hyena, who prowled about to devour and allure its unwary victim, uttering piercing cries like those of a child in distress.

This was very different music to the melody which charmed us during the day; and, as the evening advanced, a feeling of indescribable terror came over me, of which I could not divest myself.

The sun had almost run his course in the heavens, and was lingering a moment in the glorious west,

as if to increase our admiration of the splendour of his setting,

> ———" Resting on the horizon's verge;
> The distant mountains wearing crowns of gold,
> Like vassal kings, arose to guard his throne."

In Africa that beautiful object, the setting sun, may be gazed at for a length of time without experiencing any of that pain in the organs of vision, which the contemplation of it universally causes in England, and other countries of similar latitude.

Twilight is of very short duration, and if the moon does not shine darkness soon covers the earth. On the night in question, the moon rose about midnight, and shed its pale silvery light on all around, previously to which, every object had been shrouded in impenetrable darkness, save one spot. The canoe men having gone on shore, had lighted a large fire to frighten away the wild beasts, and were about to stretch themselves around it for the night. They had requested me to join them, but fearful of the consequences, and deeming myself more secure on the water, I

refused, and with a few of our party remained in the canoe.

Sleep, at this early period, was out of the question, as the musquitoes were ready to eat us; as soon, therefore, as the moon arose, I sat up, and contemplated the scenery around.

Almost all the remarks respecting the sun were here applicable to the moon; and in all my previous wanderings I do not recollect ever seeing this planet look so beautiful, as at various times I have seen it here. She possesses a soothing, softening, influence, of which the natives themselves appear susceptible, taking advantage of the clear cloudless night for sporting and relaxation. The night of which I am now speaking, was not, however, remarkable for its clear blue sky; for large masses of fleecy clouds interposed, and incessantly flitted across the face of the pale planet, foretelling the approach of rain. But when she did sail uninterruptedly through the field of blue, the scene was lovely. A flood of pale light seemed poured down to each glade and alley of the forest, and as it fell upon the silvery bark of a weeping birch, a refulgent and almost kindred light was darted back,

while the less dazzling brightness which it imparted to the bark of the gigantic oak to which our canoe was moored, caused the broad mass to rise in strong relief from the dark shadow in the back ground. Ever and anon too, as a ray shot through the branches overhead, the dew upon the long grass sparkled as if each drop had been a liquid diamond.

The huge tree that hung over us had thrown a deep shadow on our canoe and all that were stretched out in it, and the consciousness that we were invisible to all save him who had caused "the moon and stars to rule the night," dissipated, in a measure, my fears and apprehensions. At a little distance from us, on a verdant plot of ground, surrounded by pine trees, blazed the crackling fire which the canoe men had lighted, and they were now soundly sleeping at the distance of a few feet from it, receiving the red glare of light full on their broad black faces, which made them look more like a tribe of the copper coloured Indians than a group of sable Africans. Now and then the roar of wild beasts sounded through the woods and rang on our ears, the appalling effects of which

none can conceive unless they had previously heard it. But I was now overwhelmed with fatigue. There was a tranquil pause, a thick cloud obscured the moon, sleep stole heavily over my eyelids, and in a few moments I yielded to its influence,

"Oblivions of all sorrows, griefs, and ills."

CHAPTER V.

EARLY in the morning we were again pursuing the course of the river, and used additional exertion in order to arrive at some more convenient resting place for the night.

The weather, agreeably with my expectations on the past night, was dark and cloudy, and it was not long before the rain descended in copious showers. Our awning of mats was now of essential service to us; and the weather seemed to compel the men to increase the speed of the canoe, if they wished to arrive before night at some place of better shelter; the master of the canoe assisting at the paddles himself, and ordering our men to "pull away."

About four o'clock in the afternoon, we perceived that we were approaching some town, from seeing a number of wicker fishpots, which were fastened

to the banks of the river. We could not at first conceive the use of them, but on enquiry found they were for catching prawns and shrimps. At high water the tide overflowed them, and thus the fish became taken, which, after being smoked, were sent to Benin market.

The rain had now subsided, and we wished to get all the fresh air we could by turning back the mats; but no sooner had we attempted to remove them, than the men began to use us very roughly, each charging his gun afresh, and making a most hideous noise. Our eyes were now opened to our situation, and we plainly saw we had been indulging in false security during the whole of our pleasant journey from Yarcella.

"So quick trod sorrow on the heels of joy."

It was now evidently their intention to kill us, and make slaves of the blacks, neither of which they could have done with such ease at Mongyee or Yarcella, fearing, as they did, that the strangers from Benin, who were at both these places during the time we were there, might hear of it, and that

it would eventually come to the ears of the governor of that capital. But now nothing prevented them from immediately accomplishing their wishes. We were in a lonely situation, and surrounded only by those who were interested in our death, and they might have for ever kept it a secret, perhaps by sinking us forthwith in the river.

They stopped the canoe, and the "fetish man" produced some cowrys, (or "negroes' teeth," as they are sometimes called,) a small shell imported from the West Indies. The flat side is white, and the convex red. These shells were to decide our fate in the following manner: they were to be thrown up into the air by this man, and on the turn of them our lives depended.

Having grasped a quantity in his hand he threw them up like a careless boy playing at pitch and toss, to ascertain whether it was the will of heaven that they should immediately shoot us in the canoe. Our feelings at this moment cannot be described. In an instant the unexpected storm had burst upon us in all its unrelenting fury; with tears in our eyes we begged the Almighty to soften the hearts of the savages, and avert the impending destruc-

tion. Regardless of our distress they proceeded in the dreadful ordeal. The shells fell rattling down, and in an instant every eye save our own, was bent towards them. We dreaded the consequence, and simply looked for the first expression which would arise on their countenances. The fetish man who had thrown them up raised his head, and blessed be God, disappointment and vexation were most strongly marked on his countenance. His face was indeed the index of the mind; almost every cowry had turned on the convex side, and shewed its flat surface of white. Hope sprung up in our breasts; we thought we were safe, at least for the present; but what was our distress when we found he had the cruelty and bad faith to hand the shells to the officer next him in command, requesting him "to try his luck." He willingly took them, and sitting at the bow of the canoe, did as he was requested. Again they fell and turned up for life. Their rage and disappointment was now unbounded: they stood still and looked at each other with countenances full of astonishment and vexation; not even satisfied with this, their second appeal to heaven, they determined on a third time,

and actually handed the yet lucky shells to a man at the stern of the boat. He threw them, but to no purpose; the major part again shewed the white side uppermost, and baffled them in their third attempt. If ever the power of Divine Providence was more apparent in one thing than another, it was in this; the hand of the Almighty had evidently been "stretched out to save" here, and surely we might have said, "In our distress we cried unto the Lord, and he delivered us out of our troubles." Our thankfulness and joy was beyond expression; a feeling of deep and fervent gratitude pervaded our bosoms, which language cannot describe; in a word it was "the motion of a hidden fire that trembled in the breast."

With apparently great reluctance they again took their paddles, and proceeded onwards. Fresh woes we soon found were in store for us, as the town they were going to belonged to a noted robber chief, called "Navrey." His nefarious practices had instilled terror into the hearts of all the neighbouring chieftains, while his piracies were so well known to all the natives that they never dared to pass before his dominions in their

canoes without laying their whole business before him, and craving permission to go on their way unmolested.

This was the man to whom we were shortly to be given up; and from his hands we could expect no mercy; they had, from all we could learn, been deeply imbrued with the blood of his fellow creatures at different times, and we saw no chance that greater lenity would be extended to us.

Filled with melancholy forebodings, we were propelled unconsciously along till we arrived opposite the town of the pirate Navrey. It is pleasantly situated on an island, which is nearly circular, and about a mile in diameter, containing a population of about five hundred; a people warlike, athletic, and trained to arms from their youth; who from their courage and prowess, favoured by their local situation, and governed by their "Island king," have risen to a degree of independency which none of the surrounding tribes can boast of. We approached the shore, and found a considerable number of the natives congregated together to receive us. The canoe men having landed and proceeded to the governor to announce our arrival,

returned with orders for us immediately to appear before him. A chill of horror now came over us: uncertain of the reception we should meet with, we hesitated to obey, and exclaimed that we were willing and ready to die where we were, but would not go on shore with them to endure what new tortures they might be pleased to impose upon us. Little, however, did this affect them, save that they became more infuriated, and insisted on our immediately leaving the canoe. It would have been madness to contend against them, so we were obliged to submit. This was a trying moment for all of us, but we prepared to meet our fate with calmness and fortitude. There was no prospect of the crew being taken, the object being to make slaves of them; but for ourselves we feared there was but little chance that we should ever again meet them on earth; we gathered around the poor sorrowful blacks, and took a hasty but affectionate farewell of them; bidding them publish our fate, and the manner of our death, in whatever country they might be hereafter enslaved, so that these tidings might reach the owner of the vessel; but more than this, the sad story of our woes might at

length reach our dear relatives and friends, who might otherwise be subject to painful suspense if left in ignorance of our fate.

I had then but little time for reflection, but I felt a degree of relief to my aching breast when the poor fellows gave me their earnest assurances that they would, if possible, convey such tidings to our dear friends at home. There was not time for the words of Cowper to have been uttered, but the sentiment found an echo in my bosom.

> "My friends do they now and then send
> A wish or a thought after me?
> Oh tell me I yet have a friend,
> Though a friend I am never to see."

Impressed with such feelings I moved on towards the hall of justice, (or "palaver house," as it is termed,) accompanied by my fellow prisoners, the mate, &c., like criminals going to the place of execution. Having entered the room, I was at once struck with the person of the chief; his stature, mien, and deportment, at once bespoke him to be a ruler and governor. He was about five feet nine inches high, his limbs well formed, and of beautiful

proportions. He was surrounded by many of his people, who were all, like himself, well made, robust, and of the most exquisite symmetry, differing from him only in complexion, theirs being of the blackest jet and glossy as ebony, whilst his was a paler and more subdued stain, approaching to that of an American Indian; which, contrasted with his pearly teeth, well formed mouth, and overarching brow, beneath which his small dark eye darted forth an eagle glance of scrutiny, formed a countenance well calculated to inspire a beholder with profound dread, if ever he had previously heard of the character of the man.

On approaching this robber chief we all fell down on our knees before him, and earnestly begged he would have compassion on us. Our supplicating posture and earnest cries for mercy, touched the heart which we had deemed encased in "tripple brass," the silken cord of pity drew him from his purpose, and in a moment he was "a man and a brother," moved with the spectacle of white men (perhaps the first he had ever seen) on their knees, with eyes suffused with tears, and imploring protection in supplicating strains. He

rushed toward us, desired us to seat ourselves in the apartment, and, evidently overcome by what he had witnessed, demanded of the men the bag of cowrys which had been so repeatedly tried against us, and with one of his chiefs hastened from the apartment to consult these silent oracles, and decide on our fate. We remained in a dreadful state of suspense for about a quarter of an hour, during which time, the savage canoe men were all seated before us, with their muskets loaded, ready to execute the commands of their superior.

When he returned, a smile irradiated his countenance, his stern brow became relaxed, and the dark piercing eye beamed with benevolence and kindness. In his hand he held two bottles of rum, and approaching us, took us to his bosom, and by the most affectionate and significant gestures, intimated his intention of being our friend and protector. This was unexpected indeed, and a source of utter astonishment to all. The inhuman canoe men seemed to feel the same surprise, but instead of evincing gratitude for our deliverance they were doubly incensed against us; having brought us to the lion's den, and cast us in, they

had with breathless expectation waited to see us consumed. They had placed us in the furnace they had deemed seven times heated, but our God, to whom we cried, sent his angel and stopped the lion's mouth, and around and about us in the furnace of destruction, "was *one* like unto the Son of man." They had hoped, agreeably to their orders, to have taken our heads back with them, and now blamed themselves for having ever let us out of their hands. They had seen the effect of our supplication on our bended knees, and tried the experiment themselves before the chief, begging that he would again put us into their hands; but he sternly refused, and prevented further importunities by adding, that they had better look well to themselves; for that if they had not been slaves he would certainly keep them prisoners. This produced an admirable effect; they took the hint at once, proceeded to their canoes, and kept close by them during the night. In the morning, as early as dawn, they returned to their town, having landed the crew and left them to follow us.

The chief kindly ordered a room to be fitted, and desired us to be conducted to it, promising us

before parting that he would send us on to Gatto. We repaired to our apartment, which we found very comfortable, being covered with various handsome country cloths. Shortly after our arrival he sent us some sheep, and some plantains, and we felt happy in being thus unexpectedly delivered from death and the hands of our most relentless enemies.

During the night we slept very comfortably, except that I was occasionally disturbed, by the dysentery, by which I had recently been attacked in the country, and was still subject to its influence. The following morning we awoke refreshed and comparatively happy, and made a hearty breakfast off our mutton and yams. A Portuguese vessel was here lying in the river; the chief allowed the supercargo to go with a communication from me to the captain, requesting he would permit us to come on board to sleep until we could receive some assistance from the king of Benin, and in return we would assist him in rigging and other work connected with the ship. On the return of the supercargo, however, we found the captain was then at Gatto, and the mate could not

give us an answer on the subject. In the course of the day the clerk inadvertently happened to mention the fact of there having been some brass pans in the canoe which had been taken from the wreck. I had noticed them in the canoe, and considered they were sent as a present to the chief Navrey from the neighbouring state; but it appeared the canoe men had taken them back again. He was much enraged when he found this to be the case, and native spirit and love of plunder was strongly marked on his countenance. With a stern voice he demanded why we had not made him acquainted with this fact before. We feared exceedingly, at this moment, that he might, in his state of disappointment and rage, wreak his vengeance on us in the absence of the real authors of it.

The town in a few moments seemed in a state of alarm, and canoes were immediately launched on the river, filled with men, well armed, to proceed after the fugitives, and bring them back. But it was to no purpose, and they returned in the afternoon, without being able to come up with them. We regretted exceedingly not hav-

ing mentioned the circumstance earlier; for they might then have overtaken them, and made a prize of the whole, which the natives seemed to value exceedingly. We were very uneasy about the business, the whole of the day; but were relieved in the evening by a visit from the chief, who brought with him another bottle of rum, and sat some time with us in our apartment, conversing with us; and on parting, promised to send the clerk and supercargo to Gatto on the morrow, whilst I should remain, together with the mate and crew, in our present abode.

On the following morning, agreeably to appointment, we found a large canoe was prepared, and at ten o'clock they started, accompanied by the chief himself, together with the linguist, in order that it might be seen what could be done for us at Benin.

In the evening the chief and interpreter returned, but the former had met with rather a singular adventure. Shortly after his arrival at the town of Gatto, it appeared that a messenger from the king of Benin was also there, to enquire respecting us, with orders to punish those who

had engaged in making us prisoners. While he was in the midst of prosecuting his enquiries, our friends, with the chief, stood before him. The messenger immediately concluding we were his prisoners, and that he had been accessory in plundering the ship and cargo, ordered him to be taken into custody, and would have shot him immediately, but for the timely interference of the supercargo.

The prejudice was so strong against the chief, that it was with the greatest difficulty his release was obtained; but on the representation of the supercargo, that he had been instrumental in saving all our lives, and rescuing us from the hands of our enemies, he was allowed to depart, after having promised to send me with the crew to Gatto, and given two near relatives as hostages. He returned home much enraged, immediately summoned a council of his principal men, (Omagardies,) and related the indignities which had been offered to him. By their violent gestures it was evident that they were exceedingly exasperated by the treatment their prince had received from the hands of the

Benin messenger; and we were not without our fears again, that they would turn upon us, to atone for the insult which we had been the unhappy means of bringing on the head of our protector.

After a short time had elapsed, they seemed a little more calm and collected; and the chief having ordered a bottle of rum to be brought, very familiarly sat down with us. Through the medium of our interpreter, we told him that we hoped he would not blame us for the ill-treatment he had received on our account, and promised when we left we would give him a "good book:" this is a written character, which they prize very much. The supercargo had written a note by him, wherein he advised me to come immediately to Gatto, and not proceed to "Bowbee," a town at the mouth of the river Benin, belonging to the king of "Werre," who had sent for us to come thither. A further inducement to proceed to the former was the kindness manifested by the natives towards him; he therefore urged me to leave on the ensuing day. On this I mentioned my wish to the chief Navrey, and he

promised me that it should be as I desired. I was much pleased, during my stay in this place, with the liberality and frankness of the chief, as well as of those by whom he was surrounded. He seems a ruler possessed of absolute power amongst them, and will allow no canoes to pass his territories without being first acquainted with the nature of the business of those who are in them.

The houses of this town are built very closely together, and the inhabitants appear as one family. They are as black as jet, but the boldest and finest race of people we saw in the country. Few are less in stature than five feet nine inches; their carriage is erect and graceful in the extreme, and we never once saw a deformed person among them; on the contrary, we noticed several pre-eminently remarkable for their symmetry. One in particular, whom, by way of distinction, we used to call "the handsome man," was fully entitled to that appellation. He was about twenty-two years of age. His features seemed cast more in the European mould, being interesting and well proportioned;

his teeth were regular, and of pearly whiteness; small feet and knees, and a well-formed leg: when walking, he used his sword as a stick, and with his gun resting on his right shoulder, he presented an unusually graceful appearance, and would have been an excellent model for the pencil of the artist, or chisel of the sculptor. This character applies only to the men; the women fall infinitely below them in respect of personal beauty and proportion; their bodies are moreover tat-tooed with various grotesque figures, and disgusting marks, which combine to render them very inferior to their lords in graceful comeliness. Their principal occupation is weaving mats, fish-pots, &c., in which they excel. The boys are very early initiated into the arts of war and the use of arms; they use the bow and arrow with surprising dexterity, and seldom fail hitting their mark even at a great distance; nor are they less celebrated in the use of the gun, which they hold in a peculiar manner. For fear of accident they never bring the piece to the shoulder, but place the left hand against the end of the stock,

thus supporting it by the hands only. On one occasion, I was a witness to the superiority of this plan over the ordinary method. A man discharged his piece, and it burst, and shivered the barrel in pieces, whilst he did not sustain the slightest injury: had he fired as we are accustomed to do, his arm would have been shattered, and his life endangered.

CHAPTER VI.

On the morning of the 17th July, I rose at an early hour for the purpose of pursuing my journey to Gatto, according to the instructions of the supercargo. During the night I suffered greatly from the dysentery, and the mate was also labouring under the same dreadful disease. We however prepared for our journey, and were just on the point of starting, when a canoe arrived from the king of Werre, with orders for us to come to Bowbee. It was some time before they arranged this affair; but as Navrey had promised to send us to Gatto, and had given hostages for the performance of his engagement, it was, after the lapse of an hour, settled that we should proceed thither without further delay.

The canoe prepared for us was a large one, and was well manned with some of the chief's finest subjects, completely armed, and furnished with every necessary for our journey. We were anxious to reach Gatto, and having recovered from the alarm occasioned by the arrival of the messengers from Bowbee, we were in better spirits, and we stepped into the canoe which was waiting for us, with somewhat lighter hearts than when we first put foot on this spot. Our landing had been marked by grief and the forebodings of despair; the aspect of the heavens above us were lowering and dark, and our minds were alike beclouded with fearful anticipations of a dismal issue. Now the heavens beamed with brightness, corresponding, in some respect, with those rays of cheering light which dispelled the mist of dejection and despair, and promised a better day. Being seated in the canoe, the men immediately commenced propelling her along. The town of Navrey gradually receded from our view, and at the turn of the river was wholly hid from observation by a dense mass of intervening foliage. The further we proceeded into the interior, the

more lavish nature appeared to have been with her gifts. The water seemed more pelucid, and reflected objects with great precision and certainty. At times we proceeded on through a vast expanse of the clear element resembling a beautiful lake, whilst the banks seemed to shew a series of pigmy harbours and mimic bays; sometimes the extreme end of the sheet of water appeared to possess no opening, but on approaching to the extremity, a little outlet might be visible, just sufficient for the boat to pass along; the margin on either side seemed a beautiful parterre, so rich and rare were the flowers that bloomed around us. Often did our course appear as if interrupted by some lovely and enchanting bank. But these, which we expected would arrest our progress, were but slight accumulations of soil borne on the still bosom of the waters of that river, from which a thousand water plants, in naval pride, shot up their tall stems, and long glossy leaves. Flowers, of colours passing fair, expanded, as if to court the gaze of an unclouded sky, and receive the first beams of the rising sun. Delightful indeed was it, whilst passing

through this undulating garden, trembling with the slight swell occasioned by the dipping paddle, to witness the numerous swarms of butterflies and humming birds that peopled the air, and decorated the leaves and flowers of every waving plant.

Again the river opened broad to our view, and we perceived in the distance a vessel, which, on a nearer view, I found to be the Portuguese schooner, to the captain of which I had sent the supercargo a few days previously, requesting permission to come on board. Here the men stopped the canoe, and went on board, having some mats to sell. I accompanied them also, and was kindly received by the mate; who informed me that they came there to purchase a cargo of the country manufactured cloths, and ivory, for the island of St. Thomas. As soon as they had finished trading, the men again entered the canoe, and we proceeded on to Gatto.

At three o'clock we arrived, and there found the supercargo and clerk waiting for us. They had been kindly treated by the governors of that place, and accordingly presented us to them shortly after

our arrival. The governors were habited much in the same style as their brother potentates, and wore coral round the neck, arms and wrists, but none on the head, as we first noticed at Yarcella. All spoke a little English, and seemed willing to cultivate an acquaintance with us. After presenting us with some red goora nuts as a token of friendship, we were allowed to retire to the lodging prepared for us. Our host, the master of the house, a sympathising, kind hearted-man, was a "Tantee," or native of Cape Coast, and could speak English very intelligibly.

The town of Gatto is large, but built without any attention to order or regularity, the houses being for the most part scattered or erected wherever a clear spot of ground might have presented itself; for the place is extremely woody, and abounds with numerous lofty cocoa-nut trees. The huts are rather larger than those we had previously seen, being about ten or twelve feet high on the inside, and some of the halls about forty feet long and twenty broad. They are for the most part built of clay and surrounded by walls of the same material. The roof is covered with branches of

the bamboo tree; in the centre is a hole which serves the purposes of window and chimney. Through this hole the rain also falls, and is received into a large square tank immediately underneath, and conveyed away underground by channels from one room to another.

These apartments are almost totally devoid of furniture; even the necessary articles of chairs, table, and stools, are rarely to be found; although if we might judge of their skill by some chests we saw, which were formed out of a single block of wood and hollowed with singular neatness and precision, I should say they would make very clever carpenters, if not cabinet makers.

Their beds, which consist of mats, with a covering of coarse cotton cloth, are placed on the ground in a recess in the wall; which often serves also as a depository for their fetish.

During the rainy season they sit around a small fire, kindled on the floor, without any thing to enclose it, and the smoke escapes through the aperture in the roof; where generally may be seen suspended their war drum, together with earthen vessels, and various articles of fetish. The doors

are hung much in the same manner as a ship's rudder, the hinge being formed of wood resembling a spigot and fosset.

On the third day after our arrival in this town, we received orders to go to Benin and present ourselves to the king; but my health had been gradually declining for some days past. My clothes were in a very filthy state, and the shirt I wore had not been washed for nineteen days. In consequence of remaining naked whilst it was washing, my health and strength were so much impaired, my mate also being indisposed, that it was deemed prudent for us to remain at Gatto. The supercargo and crew therefore proceeded without delay to Benin, in order to see what the king would do with us.

They were absent about six days, during which time I was extremely ill. I thought, and even hoped, that every hour would put a termination to my sufferings. My body was wasted almost to a skeleton, and I could scarcely support myself, even with the help of a stick.

On the return of our friends the joy I experienced somewhat cheered my mind, and alleviated

my pain. They prevailed on me at the same time to eat some unripe guavas, a species of plum which grows in the woods at this place, and is frequently used in the West Indies to cure the flux. This produced the desired effect; and as I continued to eat them in their green state, my health and strength gradually returned.

I was much gratified at the kindness shown to the supercargo and crew by the king of Benin. He required a full account of all the circumstances connected with the loss of the vessel, and the conduct of the natives toward us, and further requested a written list of the cargo, which was furnished him. During the recital he seemed highly incensed and astonished at the barbarity of the Mongyee people, and promised immediately to dispatch messengers to that place to endeavour to recover some of the property; and further said that we should be sent in about ten days time to Badagry, by the way of Lagos, to the owner of our vessel, who had a factory established in that place, and from thence we could easily procure a passage to our native country.

CHAPTER VII.

We waited for the performance of the king's promise, as it will be seen, many weeks, during which time we suffered the greatest privation. We were daily buoyed up with the hope of our departure, the people assuring us that the messengers would soon arrive, as the orders had been given for the canoes, and they would not be long making.

At this time, a Portuguese schooner arrived, to purchase a cargo of ivory and cloths, for a considerable town on the coast, called Wydah, and the owner kindly promised us a passage to that place, as soon as the vessel should be ready to sail again, which, however, would not be for at least three months to come; but even

this was desirable, and we looked forward to the certainty of getting away after that period, if the king did not send to us before.

Our situation was truly deplorable. We were without shoes to our feet; our linen was extremely filthy and disgusting; we were tormented by musquitoes day and night, subject to all kinds of hardships, with bad lodging and worse living. John Johnson, the mate, exposed alike to the same calamities, and subject to the same privations, got worse and worse every day. He did not appear to be in violent pain, but his appetite was very keen, and this is always considered a bad omen. He seldom arose from his miserable bed in the recess, and suffered greatly from depression of spirits, which, with the ravages disease was making on him, reduced him to a mere shadow. I have often lain by his side on the mat, and endeavoured to rouse and cheer him; telling him how much I had suffered, and that he was not even so bad as I was then; but it was to no purpose, nd it seemed in all probability a few days uld terminate his career of pain and suffering·

I determined, therefore, immediately to proceed to Benin myself, and see the king; conceiving, it might have been the neglect of his ministers that had caused our being detained so long beyond the time he had specified. Accordingly, I started in the morning, with two men, who were to carry me in a hammock slung on a pole, and borne on the shoulders. But my sufferings during this journey cannot be described; language is inadequate to convey what I went through on this occasion. Scarcely had we proceeded five miles on our journey, when we were overtaken by a tornado. It seemed as if the elements were fiercely contending together; the wind blew sudden gusts, tearing up trees, and scattering devastation around us: the thunder roared most awfully, and the lightning gleamed fearfully in the heavens. Soon the rain descended in torrents, and from the narrowness and badness of the road, I was obliged to get out of the hammock, and wade through mud and water up to my knees. Whilst I was doing this, the hammock men proceeded on before me, and quickened their

pace, so that they soon got beyond the reach of my voice, and left me to draw my weak and emaciated frame through the boggy and rugged path. It was here I felt the misfortune of being poor; had I possessed a single bead or button, they would have stopped in a moment; but I had nothing about me, and was obliged to submit to their cruelty. I was exhausted by fatigue, and really wished the Almighty would put an end to my misery. However, I managed to follow them some miles, and at length came up with them, and again got into the hammock. It was completely drenched with rain, and being warm with my exertion, I was seized with the most violent cramps, which often obliged me to scream and jump out of the hammock. It was as if the icy hand of death had taken hold of my vitals, so acute was the pain.

The rain was still descending in torrents on my defenceless head, and a long dreary journey of twenty miles remained to be performed. My soul seemed to faint within me. We at length reached a small town, where there was

a room provided for the accommodation of travellers. Here they kindled a fire, which seemed like new life to me; and having dried myself, I partook of a mess of "fu-fu," with a keen relish. After this, we all lay down to rest, in our little apartment, miserably huddled together; the house, being a public one, and a sort of half-way resting place for travellers from Gatto to Benin, called by the natives, "Crooms."

Early on the ensuing morning we departed for the capital, the road to which is extremely narrow, and lies through a very extensive wood. The trees which bounded our path on the right and left were immensely large, and of towering altitude. The rain had not ceased, and the road was a complete quagmire all the way, and so slippery that I often feared that the men who bore me would fall, and that I should be precipitated in the mud. They seemed, however, accustomed to the roads, and as a security, each carried a long staff, with which he walked, to provide against a fall. As we approached the end of our journey, the road got worse and worse; the path in some places not being wider than the sole of the shoe. It was also

situated on the top of a bank, the sides of which sloped off, and by the continual fall of rain, being a red clay soil, was so slippery, that I chose rather to walk than run the risk of having my neck broken. There was not actually sufficient room for both feet together on this elevated African road, and we were obliged to put the heel of one foot to the toe of the other, alternately, in order to make any progress whatever. At length we reached the end of the wood, and a large plain opened before us, which was overgrown with Indian grass. In the distance we perceived the town, which resembles a number of barns, each house being surrounded with clay walls. We arrived at the house belonging to the "Captain of War," in the suburbs, and had an interview with him. On being ushered into his presence, I was surprised to see a youth of about sixteen, seated on a stool in a large hall, and surrounded by a number of venerable chiefs, most of whom were four times his age. I afterwards found that his father, who held the situation, had recently been sent to conduct the war in the interior, and had fallen in battle; the office therefore devolved on the son, who is next in rank

to the king. As soon as I entered, he approached me, and as a token of friendship presented some gooras in a long wooden box, beautifully carved and ornamented. I was then conducted to a smaller and more private apartment, where he ordered a glass of rum to be brought to me; and asked a series of questions, through the medium of his interpreter, respecting the loss of the cargo and ship, and seemed to take great interest in what was communicated to him. After this, he showed me his magnificent robes, and large hat, (which resembles that which is worn by the London coal porters,) with apparently great delight; he being the only person, besides the king, who is permitted to wear such a badge of distinction. He asked if I had any like it in my vessel, or clothes such as his robes. I replied that I had clothes, but not like his. The supercargo when he visited him had given him a tune on the flute, which delighted him so much that it was with the greatest difficulty he managed to get away.

It excited my surprise to see here two or three small pieces of cannon, of British and Portuguese manufacture; but they were not mounted, and had

perhaps been procured as models for imitation, as the country abounds in iron; but from the expense attendant on working the mines, there is, comparatively speaking, very little wrought to perfection. I saw, however, some swords of their own manufacture, which were very well turned out of hand; and was credibly informed they could make muskets, with the exception of the lock, in great perfection. We left this place, and proceeded to the town of Benin, which is only a mile distant; and about the middle of the day arrived at the "alien house," the appointed place of residence for strangers.

Having taken some refreshment, I sent to the king announcing my arrival, and shortly after I was waited upon by an officer of his Majesty, who came to present the king's *service* to me. He was curiously habited, wearing a sort of short petticoat from the waist down to the knees, composed of a cloth very much valued by them, resembling our white bunting. This encircled his loins, and set off like an ancient dame's hooped petticoat; the upper part of the body was naked as well as the legs and feet; his neck was ornamented with strings of red coral. In his hand he held a fan

made of leather, to keep off the flies, and protect him from the rays of the sun. His head was quite unprotected, being shaved all over, with the exception of a circular spot on the crown, from which a small tuft was still permitted to grow. Such was the personage who brought the king's "service."

After his departure I went out to see the town, and visited several of the chiefs, who treated me kindly, and gave me bamboo wine to drink. The houses are decidedly superior to those at Gatto, being larger, but for the most part built on the same principle. The palace of the king is a large building of wood, not unlike one of our British shot manufactories, having a tower or steeple at one end; the rest of the building consists only of one story; the whole is surrounded by mud walls, which extend some miles. Near it are several fetish places, the depository of the usual absurd objects of worship, skulls, skeletons, and large ivory teeth. Many unfortunate slaves are also sacrificed at different seasons in front of these temples. From this place I proceeded to the market, which is a very large one, and the resort of natives from all parts of the country. At first sight it presented

a busy and animated appearance; the ground on which it is held is a large plain, covered with temporary streets, each compartment formed by four upright poles, and roofed with large mats. Underneath these sheds, are exposed the different articles of merchandise, viz., salt, black soap, yams, plantains, pins for the hair of very rough manufacture, and various other articles.

A quantity of monkey's flesh attracted my attention, from the paws and nails which were exposed; and dogs, goats, and sheep, were here in abundance, as also many articles of European and even British manufacture; for which they exchange slaves, numbers of whom I saw chained in the market ready to be conveyed by the first opportunity to the sea shore. I returned in the evening from my solitary ramble, and retired to rest after partaking of a mess of "fu fu."

The following morning I again proceeded to the market, where I found a large assemblage of people. Their attention was at once directed to me, and I was doubtless looked upon as a sort of "rara avis" among them. Their astonishment was great, but I question whether it was equal to mine when

I perceived among the swarthy group which surrounded me—what? a human being *whiter* than myself, in a word, if the expression may be used, a *white negro.*

I had then ocular demonstration of the truth of the assertion, that modern discovery has shown us that the sun is not the sole cause of the dark colour of the skin, since light coloured nations are found inhabiting the warmest regions, dark nations inhabiting the coldest countries; and that people of various shades of colour may exist together in the same climate; such as the red Peruvian, the brown Malay, and the nearly white Abyssinian, in the very zones which the very blackest people inhabit.

The "Philosophical Transactions" contains an anecdote which will authenticate this part of the Narrative, whilst the assertion herein contained will fully prove the truth of the statement I am about to quote. "A man and his wife (negroes) resided in the interior of the country, where Europeans had never been seen, yet from time to time the wife produced a white child. Fearing her husband's resentment, she endeavoured to conceal it; but the man insisted on seeing the infant: it was

produced, and immediately on his beholding it, he exclaimed, "I love it the better for that, because my father was a white man, although my grandfather and grandmother were both as black as myself; and although we come from a place where no white people are ever seen, yet there was always a white child in every family that was related to us."

I was not sufficiently curious to enquire into the "family affairs" of this singular young man, further than that his father and mother were both black. His head was shaved to the crown, where a small tuft of white wool was allowed to grow, just like that on the back of a lamb, or the tail of a white poodle dog; his eyes were of a beautiful pink, and shaded with a light brown eye-brow. The light affected his sight in a considerable degree, and he was unable to see clearly during the middle of the day. He was the only one I noticed of such singular peculiarities, in the town, although I met several persons perhaps equally curious, whose bodies were covered with spots of black, white, or brown. Near the market I perceived three fine horses grazing, and, it being rather an unusual sight, I enquired to whom they belonged;

I was answered, that they were the king's; but they had not been ridden for some time, and the natives were now afraid to mount them. I returned to my lodgings, and found the king had sent a sheep and some yams for our use. These were great dainties, and I made a hearty meal. In the middle of the day I went to the palace, and had an audience of the king. Here I perceived more of the pomp of power, and pride of royalty, than I had hitherto been witness to. On entering the apartment I perceived his Majesty; a fine, stout, handsome man, with something of kingly dignity about him. He was clothed in a long robe, and wore a large hat, ornamented with gold lace. Several chiefs in full dress surrounded him, besides a body guard on either side, with drawn swords. On my approaching him, he held out his arm, which three young princes stepped forward and supported. I stated that my business with him was to remind him of the promise he had made two months since, viz., that he would send us away in about ten days; that we were anxiously waiting for the arrival of his messengers, under circumstances of great privation and distress; my

own health being very bad, and the mate's infinitely worse; that I feared the latter would fall a victim to the disease of the country, unless speedily removed; and further, that we were a great burthen and expense to the man with whom we lodged, and had nothing wherewith we could repay him. He listened very attentively to my request, and replied, by his linguist, that he would most certainly send the messengers to us on the morrow, at Gatto, and that I had better return immediately to my old lodging, and wait their arrival, as he feared I might get sick in Benin. He then retired with his attendants, and shortly after sent me a bottle of rum, and some butter in a dish; the latter is esteemed a great mark of respect.

The better to insure the performance of his promise, I went to see the messengers, who I understood were to conduct me to the coast. They all promised fairly enough, but unfortunately, no dependence could be placed in them. They are a slothful and very dilatory set of people, and will only act agreeably to their feelings, and the impulse of the moment. I left them, and determined on returning the next day, which I immedi-

ately made known to the hammock boys, that they might be in readiness.

Not long after my interview with the messengers, I was standing in the principal street. I noticed one of them coming towards me, performing the most extraordinary gesticulations. At first I thought him mad, for he danced and capered through the street, followed by a great many persons who seemed to partake in the same feeling of joy or madness. He exhibited first one leg then the other, alternately, extended his hands, and then pointed to a string of coral which encircled his ancles and wrists. The fact was, the king had made a "gentleman" of him, having bestowed an honour similar to our knighthood, and placed the insignia of his order, the coral, round his legs and arms. He was anxious that every body should see it, and displayed all the vanity and pride of a child when he is first breeched.

On the following morning I departed, and walked from Benin to the residence of the captain of war. He received me again very kindly, and made me partake of a boiled fowl and some dumplings, with bamboo wine to drink. After my meal, he brought

forward some written characters, given him by Portuguese captains, which he prized greatly, and requested me to give him one also to add to his stock. He was in fact a collector of autographs. I complied with his desire and afterwards drew a vessel and man's head for him. Nothing could exceed his joy; he took the pencil from me, supposing perhaps there was some inherent virtue in it which caused it to form the representation, and he handled it so curiously that I could not refrain from laughing outright. I had no time to spare, and therefore took leave of this interesting youth, and proceeded on my journey.

The weather had now cleared up, and the road was in a much better state for travelling than when I last passed over it. We arrived, in the course of the afternoon, at the half-way house alluded to above, and passed the night together in the same apartment as before. The next morning we resumed our journey, and proceeded through the dense wood which we before traversed, till, coming to a very narrow and bad part of the path, I was obliged to get out of the hammock. It was not long before I perceived the men had made a dupe

of me again, for they walked away as fast as possible, and left me to crawl on after them as before. The road was dreadfully rugged, and I could scarce put one foot before the other. I endeavoured to come up with them, but all attempts proved useless.

Overcome with lassitude and fatigue, I was about to lie down under one of the broad spreading trees, and yield up my jaded and troubled spirit into the hands of my God. At this moment the inhuman rascals halted, and waited for me to come up to them. I had just sufficient strength to enable me to crawl to their feet. I was indignant at their brutality, and snatching a sabre from the hand of one I extended it toward him, at the same time requesting him to put a termination to my sufferings on a block of wood that accidentally lay by the road side. Both the men looked at each other in surprize at my extraordinary but earnest request; they seemed touched by my despairing look, and immediately lifted me into the hammock. Whilst I had been walking along the road, I met several persons who were coming in the opposite direction; with them was a dog, which immediately

on seeing me stood still. He had never seen a European before, and knew not what to make of me; doubtless deeming me some supernatural being, he stood in dumb astonishment, with his eyes fixed on me, and his tail between his legs; as I gradually approached he ran off into the woods, evidently frightened at the singularity of my person and colour. The men went on very well during the remainder of our journey, and I arrived safe at Gatto about three o'clock in the afternoon. I detailed all that has been recently mentioned, respecting my journey and interview with the king, to my anxious comrades, and proceeded immediately to the bed-side of my mate.

CHAPTER VIII.

I FOUND poor Johnson decidedly worse, and evidently sinking under his violent disease. To all human appearances he could not survive many days, and I felt it my duty, seeing there was no hope, to disclose to him my feelings, and exhort him to prepare for his last change, and doubtless to him, happy release from a bed of disease and suffering. I therefore gradually unfolded to him my opinion that he could not be much longer in this world, and earnestly prayed that he would without delay prepare for a better. For several successive days he lingered in great pain, but exhibited the greatest fortitude, resignation, and humility. The first thing I did after rising in the morning was to approach his miserable mat, and feel his hand, enquiring, at the same time, (if he happened to be

awake,) how he had passed the night. At times I sat by him, and conversed, by the hour, of home and happier days. A hope of his recovery would now and then light up his pale and emaciated brow; but again on looking around, and seeing the miserable furniture of his apartment, and his dirty bed in the recess, so different from that of his little hammock in which he reposed near my cabin in the "Henry," then it was—

> ———"in these dwellings he became a thing
> Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome:
> Drooped as a wild born falcon with cleft wing,
> To whom the boundless air alone were home.
> Then came his fit again, which, to overcome,
> As eagerly the barr'd up bird will beat
> His breast and beak against the wiry dome,
> Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat
> Of his impeded soul would through his bosom eat."

It was on the 25th of September (1825), as I was in the hut, I saw the bed clothes were off him, and immediately ordered one of the men to replace them, as he was asleep, and would sometimes lie in that manner for hours without moving or speaking.

A short time after this I went, agreeably to my daily custom, to feel his hand, and presuming he was still asleep, I cautiously approached, and took his unresisting hand in my own. What was my surprise and distress when I found it cold, stiff, and heavy; a glance on his countenance, and I saw he was dead. The man who had but a short time previous covered him with the clothes, assured me he was then living; he must have therefore died shortly afterwards, and I can aver it was without a groan. His spirit had departed like the morning stars which

"Melt away into the light of Heaven."

At the early age of 24, he was cut off by that dreadful disease, the dysentery, so common to the country in which we were detained. His body was a mere skeleton, and it was almost surprising that he existed so long as he did.

I ordered the corpse to be washed, and then decently laid out, which, having been done, I immediately proceeded to the governor, and reported his death, and requested he might be speedily buried. He said that should be done, but we

must first pay him two jars of rum as a fee, for 'breaking the ground.' The master of our house and the supercargo were at Benin that day, but I expected their arrival hourly, and hoped as soon as they came we might be able to settle the affair. They arrived at about five o'clock in the afternoon, and we all proceeded to the governor, and after a long argument with him, obtained consent to bury the deceased by the side of the unfortunate, but enterprising traveller, Belzoni.

The spot selected, was an interesting one, and I felt a degree of consolation, not unmixed with pride, that the ashes of my departed friend should repose near those of so remarkable a man. The grave of the traveller is roofed over with a neat shed of bamboos, and a rude, but neat paling surrounds it, in order that no wild beasts may approach the sacred mound.

A board is erected at the head, which has an inscription to this effect, that "All travellers are requested to keep up the grave of so great a man as *Belzoni*."

Close beside the grave, a wide spreading tree flings its branches over the sacred dust, and at

the trunk a rude bamboo seat. Under its shadow I have sat for hours, musing on the fate of the deceased traveller, and reading his memorial. He too, fell a martyr to the dysentery, whilst on his way to Timbuctoo. Yes! this was the simple tomb, of the man, who, with unwearied diligence and toil, had entered and explored the tombs of Egyptian kings, the mighty depositories of a race of Pharaohs;—beheld the hewn chamber and its sculptured sarcophagas in pristine beauty, and sent many a trophy of the wonderful achievements of ancient Egypt, to a land, where, in her National Museum, they now stand, proud monuments of the skill, not only of the Egyptian, but of him who ventured health, property, and life, in the one darling object of his chosen labour.

All that now remained to him, was the little mound by my side, and the simple, unostentatious monument bearing his name; presenting, indeed, a wide contrast to the huge piles of Memphis and Thebes.

"He heeded not the lavish rhyme,
And costly pomp of sculptured garnish vain;

But fondly covenanted with his friend
To lay his bones beneath the sighing bough
Of some old lonely tree."

Near this grave is another, containing the remains (as I learned from the monument) of a Mr. Hill, who came in a vessel, the "John Cato," to trade with the king of Benin. Everything seemed to promise his realizing a fortune in this enterprise, but he was taken ill of the fever, and died.

Between these two graves we buried the mate, John Johnson. The evening was far advanced before the grave was completed; we therefore approached the spot, (a little band,) to perform, after the manner of the country of the dead man, the duty of interment. There were none of the insignia of mourning,—no hearse with its nodding plumes and painted escutcheon, or even decent train of sable mourners; we stood round the grave, about six in number, the corpse on one side, whilst I officiated as chaplain. Having no prayer book, I endeavoured to recollect as much of the burial service as possible; the audience were attentive beyond mea-

sure; all was hushed and silent; the sun was resting on the extreme verge of the western horizon,—it seemed to linger for a moment, to throw its last golden ray upon the pale countenance of the departed, and cheer the hearts of the little group that surrounded his remains.

I commenced, it was a series of broken passages, but from their constant use they suggested themselves to me at that moment much after the following manner: "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever believeth in me shall never die.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

Gazing on the prostrate corpse, the next passage that suggested itself was, "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away,—blessed be the name of the Lord! Forasmuch it pleased Almighty God to take unto himself the soul of our dear

brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the grave."

The lifeless corpse was then deposited in the ground, and whilst the red earth was scattered on its fellow dust, we paused—a tear suffused every eye, and all stood silent in heartfelt grief.

The noble luminary of day was just sinking below the horizon, when we deposited the remains of poor Johnson in the grave, and it suggested the last words which were pronounced over his ashes.

"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the body, it is sown in weakness, it is raised in glory!"

The sun of our dear friend had gone down at noon day; but we trusted, like that setting orb of the west, it would again arise, clothed with beauty. Impressed with this hope, I took a last look at the corpse of my friend in its narrow home, and with the rest of my party returned to my habitation.

CHAPTER IX.

DAY after day now passed without bringing us any hopes or tidings respecting our departure. True, on one occasion we were much gratified to hear of the arrival of vessels in the river; and expecting that one might be the "Harriet," belonging to our own employer, sent in search of us, we immediately proceeded to enquire. But we were deceived, and found the vessels arrived were Portuguese schooners engaged in the slave trade.

Another obstacle prevented our leaving, even had the king been inclined to send us away. It was the hostility of the "Lagos" people to Europeans, in consequence of three of the king's wives having been killed by a party of Bri-

tish sailors in one of our boats, who were sent there to prevent the slave trade.

The chiefs were therefore so incensed, that they vowed to kill the first white they could lay their hands on.

We were consequently not very anxious under such circumstances to proceed to Badagry by the way of Lagos, as had been determined on by the king of Benin. It was about this time that I witnessed a strange ceremony, peculiar to this people, called the time of the "grand devils." Eight men were dressed in a most curious manner, having a dress made of bamboo about their bodies, and a cap on the head, of various colours, and ornamented with red feathers taken from the parrots' tail; round the legs were twisted strings of shells, which made a clattering noise as they walked, and the face and hands of each individual were covered with a net. These strange beings go about the town, by day and by night, for the term of one month, uttering the most discordant and frightful noises; no one durst venture out at night for fear of being killed or seriously

maltreated by these fellows, who are then especially engaged in driving the evil spirits from the town. They go round to all the chief's houses, and in addition to the noise they make, perform some extraordinary feats in tumbling and gymnastics, for which they receive a few cowries.

About the same time I saw a man who had given himself as a sacrifice to the fetish. A procession was formed, in all the splendour peculiar to these occasions, and the man was conducted amid a vast concourse of people to the river. Here, according to the usual custom, they affix weights to the devotee's body, make him drunk, and sink him in the tide. As some sort of compensation, however, to the poor fellow, he was allowed for some time previous to his being offered up, the privilege of going into the market whenever he felt inclined, and helping himself to whatever he fancied. I often saw him enter the market, but directly the women espied him coming, they invariably caught up their baskets and ran away. The natives have a curious way of finding out a thief by a kind of "fiery ordeal;" it is as

follows: a fire being lighted in front of the fetish house, they place an earthen pot on it, filled with some combustibles, which blaze like wild fire, and at the bottom of this a small cowry is placed.

All the inhabitants are convened around this fire, and the master of each family surrounded by his household, all of whom place their hands on his back, at once proceed to take the shell out of the burning pot. If he manages to get it out without burning his fingers he is at once declared innocent; but, on the contrary, if he fail, he and all his family are immediately pronounced guilty, and each individual member is obliged to go through the ordeal. Whoever in attempting to take out the shell, therefore, burns his fingers, is immediately declared to be the thief, and punished accordingly.

Another mode, equally singular, is occasionally resorted to. The persons suspected are made to kneel down on the ground, and each one puts out his tongue. The fetish man immediately covers it with a certain mixture, and places over the surface a small leaf. He then

takes a feather, and endeavours to push the quill part through the tongue, if he succeeds and can draw the whole of the feather clean through, the party operated upon is at once declared innocent; but should he fail in the first attempt to push the feather through, the poor creature at once suffers the extreme penalty of the law.

This is a shocking and most revolting spectacle for an Englishman to witness, which I never could look on but with feelings of horror and disgust; although the natives assured me it was not much pain, and the wound soon healed. They put great faith in this last mentioned trial, and often cause the thief to walk about the town as an example whilst the wound is unhealed.

We had almost despaired of ever getting away from this place, when, on the 18th of October, the man with whom we lived, informed us that the captain of the Portuguese schooner before mentioned was going to sail, and had agreed to take all of us except the crew to Badagry, and that the latter should be sent by the king in canoes through Lagos, the

first opportunity. We eagerly embraced this offer, and after taking leave of the chiefs, (a ceremony I hope never to perform again,) we embarked on the morning of the 21st, and immediately set sail. My feelings, on once more being at liberty may be better conceived than expressed; my heart beat high with the hope of again seeing dear happy England!

We proceeded down the river, being occasionally towed along, till the evening, when we came to anchor, and went to rest. Our sleep was now sweet and refreshing, although we had hard beds, and coarse accommodations.

The following morning we again set sail; but the weather being showery, we experienced great inconvenience from being exposed to the wet, having only a shirt and pair of trowsers each, to defend us from the rain; we however continued to amuse ourselves and keep up our spirits by means of our old friend, *the flute*. In the evening we again came to anchor; the night was very bad; vivid lightning and tremendous claps of thunder prevailed, nearly till the dawn of the following day. The morning of the

23rd, however, opened promisingly; the air was fresh and invigorating, and the water, beautifully clear and calm, gradually extended wider and wider as we proceeded, sometimes impelled by the morning breezes, and at others by the aid of oars, till we came in sight of the mouth of the river, where we saw several vessels which we subsequently found were slave traders.

At nine o'clock P.M., we anchored abreast of "Wackow's town." The thousands of musquitoes which came off from this place so annoyed us, that we found no rest here for the night. The sting of this insect is found not only to be annoying but dangerous; I was told, the governor of Cape Coast Castle was obliged to have his leg amputated, in consequence of a bite or sting he received from one of these little insects.

At seven o'clock on the morning of the 25th, we weighed anchor, and run down abreast of the town of Bowbee. Here we again dropped anchor, and were honoured with a visi from the governor, Hamacoo, with his linguist, Silvester. They expressed their regret that we

had not visited the king of Werre, who, they assured me, would have seen justice done us; and offered, if we felt inclined, to take us to that place, and shew us the king, that we might judge for ourselves as to his character, and be convinced that it was their wish to trade with Europeans.

Bowbee, is a noted place for carrying on the slave trade; I saw two schooners and a sloop, and went on board of them. They were crowded with men, women, and children, slaves, all naked, but appeared in good spirits. This perhaps arose from their not being at that time in confinement, as they enjoyed the whole range of the vessel.

In the evening we got under weigh, and waited for the ebb tide, to float us over the sand bar, which extends across the mouth of the river, or rather the bay, it being about seven miles from the termination of the river. Great caution should be observed in coming from the westward, not to approach the land nearer than ten miles, or there is very great probability of running on the bar. The mouth of the river

is not very conspicuous; the principal mark I could discern, to indicate it, was a clump of trees. at the western point of entrance, one of which very much resembled an umbrella in appearance. It took us about two hours to beat over the bar, and after succeeding, we encountered a very severe squall, accompanied by heavy rain, thunder, and lightning. This is an extremely dangerous spot, and I found, about the same time we met with our misfortune, a French brig, with three hundred slaves on board, was wrecked on this spot.

The three following days we were out of sight of land. I took the altitude of the sun at noon, and found the lat. to be 6° 14′ N. I therefore represented to the captain, that it would be necessary to keep nearer land or we might pass Badagry, the place of our destination on the coast.

He however persisted in his own plan, in keeping off the land, although I repeatedly shewed his error.

We shortly after experienced a series of fresh gales, which, from the appearance of the

clouds and general aspect of the heavens, I plainly foresaw would come to something worse, and every moment expected a heavy gale of wind would overtake us. I then requested the captain to reef the mainsail, as the vessel began to plunge; but he was so well convinced of his own tactics, and imbued with notions of the infinite superiority of his plan over mine, that he made light of my repeated warnings, and told me to go below, out of the rain. I felt extremely hurt that he would not be advised, and accordingly went below as he desired; but I had not been down long before the gale came on with redoubled fury, and the captain being alarmed had lost all presence of mind, and lowered all the sails.

The vessel therefore lay entirely at the mercy of the waves, which were now breaking over her at all points; in another moment she made a dreadful roll, everything was set adrift, and all was consternation and confusion. I foresaw that another such would send us all to a watery grave; there was no time for counsel or compliment. In a moment I jumped on the

deck and found the captain had in his agitation left the helm, and ran forward. Instantly I seized the helm, and took myself the command of the ship. I immediately ordered the foresail to be hoisted, which was done, and this righted the vessel, and kept her from foundering. The waves were running very high, and every moment a tremendous sea would break over the ship, carrying before it every thing that was loose on the deck. I nevertheless felt confident we should be able to ride out the gale, provided it did not increase. After some time the violence of the storm abated, and the poor black captain came to me to express his gratitude for the assistance afforded him in his distress. He had delayed wholesome advice so long that when my predictions came true, what with his pride, the instantaneous approach of the storm, and his general incompetency, he was struck "all of a heap," and in reality knew not what he was about. We had here again experienced a signal deliverance in time of danger, and we had again great reason to thank God for our preservation. After having escaped death in so many shapes, we were not a little apprehensive that we should find, in the fury of the

storm this day the consummation of our woes, and a termination to the buffeting of life. Towards the evening of the day the weather cleared up and we again set all sail.

Our accommodation in this vessel was not the best that can be imagined; we were huddled together in a small cabin, not more than 6ft. by 4ft., and the decks being leaky, when it rained, or a wave happened to break over the vessel, we were subject to the delightful enjoyment of a shower bath. In fact to use an Irishism, we were often obliged to "come in the rain to keep ourselves dry." Our food was also the coarsest that can be imagined, it consisted of a large "cat fish" salted, (a very rank and coarse species of the finny tribe,) which we ate with boiled yams. There was a time when my stomach would have loathed such food; but now, (as the blacks who were with us would say,) "Hungry belly yam something." Ah! thought I, remembering the parable of the Prodigal Son, (as who has not,) under circumstances of privation, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"

On the 1st November, the wind being S.W., as we were making a long board along the coast, I perceived a sail nearer than ourselves to the shore. I prevailed on the captain to go in and speak with her. On coming up with her we found she was lying at Little Po Po, and proved to be the Albert, belonging to a Mr. Houtson. We requested the master to send his boat for us, which he did, and I obtained permission from him to stop on board that night, purposing in the morning to wait on Mr. Houtson, a British merchant residing there, and see what he could do for us. In the course of the evening we found there was then on board a puncheon of rice for the Henry, my late vessel, which was to be delivered to us by the captain, should he be fortunate enough to fall in with us. This was exhilarating news, and we doubted not of procuring a passage. We slept very comfortably during the night in our new apartment, and eagerly looked forward to the result of our application to Mr. Houtson on the morrow.

About 10 o'clock on the morning of 2nd November I left the vessel in a boat, but scarcely had we proceeded half way to the shore when we were overtaken by a tornado, accompanied by torrents

of rain. The tornado is generally attended here by heavy rain, which is altogether unlike anything in Europe; it penetrates, soaks and dissolves every thing exposed to it. The effects of a tornado seem to disturb and alarm all nature; an arch is generally seen to arise in the sea, and when it reaches the zenith it explodes with tremendous fury, accompanied by electric fire, deluges of rain, and gusts of wind which tear up every thing before it; fishes leap from the sea, beasts fly in all directions, birds scream in the most dismal manner, and every animated thing gives signs of terror and dismay. Notwithstanding the fury of this sudden storm, with the exception of a thorough soaking, we reached the shore in safety. I shortly found, however, to my no small mortification, that I had to wade up to my middle through a river which runs across the road leading to Mr. Houtson's residence. This was a most fatiguing and painful duty; already soaked to the skin, I could not be much worse off as far as being immersed in water went; but the fatigue of wading through a deep stream, and afterwards of the piercing cold caused by a light wind, so chilled and benumbed me, that I was ready to sink on the ground from faintness

and languor. The guide who accompanied me seeing the state I was in, wisely urged me on, and kept walking before at full speed in order to keep my blood in circulation. At length I arrived at the house but was not able to articulate a word, from a fit of the ague which came on me.

The generous master of the house, seeing my agitation, ordered some dry clothes and a little rum to be brought. This revived me, and after changing my clothes, I detailed to him the cause of my unexpected visit. He sympathized with me and very kindly offered all of us a passage to Cape Coast. I thanked him and stated the only return we could make would be to lend assistance in working the ship.

I dined and supped with him, and in the evening was accommodated with a bed; the first I had been in, worthy that name, for many months.

The next morning, the weather being very fine, (which is always the case after a tornado,) I was deputed to go on board, in charge of some ivory, and carried with me a note to the captain from Mr. Houtson, with permission to remain on board till the vessel should land me at Cape Coast.

CHAPTER X.

I REMAINED on board the Albert till the 28th of November, when an opportunity offered for me to go to Sierra Leone, leaving the supercargo and the others, with Mr. Houtson. Captain Clapperton's expedition, to discover the termination of the Niger, was proceeding on towards Badagry, where they intended to land, and not far from Sierra Leone they had captured a Spanish brigantine, which was waiting to receive a cargo of slaves from the coast. They accordingly fell in with us at Little Po Po, or Papoe, where the slaves were confined. As soon as the officers landed from the ship the slaves were demanded to be given up; but the king obstinately refused to deliver them. The officers then briefly told him that, unless they were immediately produced, his town would be cannonaded, he himself and his son taken prisoners, and the slaves seized by main force. This seemed to alarm him

a little, and induced him to pay a little more respect to the imperious summons of Englishmen; and the unfortunate people were shortly after ordered to be liberated. The slaves when they made their appearance exhibited a long line of melancholy faces and emaciated frames, wasted by disease and close confinement, and by having suffered dreadfully from scantiness of food, and the impure air of the prison-house. They were 231 in number, men, women and children; in a complete state of nudity and heavily manacled. Several of them were lamed by the weight of their irons, and their skin sadly excoriated from the same cause.

The poor creatures evinced the liveliest joy on being made acquainted with the favourable turn in their affairs, and the gratitude they displayed to their deliverers was natural and sincere. Arrangements were speedily made on board the prize for their accommodation, and that vessel which was to have borne them to perpetual slavery in a remote region, was employed to convey them to hundreds of their countrymen at Sierra Leone. It was a peculiarly favourable opportunity for me to arrive at the same place, and I did not hesitate a moment to

embrace it; especially as I learned from the commanding officer of the Brazen (the vessel in which the mission was sent out) that a master was wanted for the "Lively," a brig bound from Sierra Leone to London.

I went on board the Brazen and was kindly received by the officers of the ship and the gentlemen of the mission, viz. Capt. Clapperton, Dr. Morrison, Dr. Dickson, Capt. Pierce, and Mr. Richard Lander. Their kindness I shall never forget. They gave me up their hammocks and cloaks, and endeavoured in a variety of ways to render me service. The following morning I witnessed their going on shore to prosecute the object of their mission. Mr. R. Lander has so faithfully and beautifully described the occasion that I shall be pardoned for giving it entire from his narrative.

"Previously to their landing, the gentlemen of the mission and officers of the ship assembled together on the quarter deck to take a final farewell of each other. There was something so moving in the pathetic spectacle of Englishmen parting under a strong persuasion, almost amounting to a conviction, of meeting no more in this world, in seeing

the manly resolution and stubborn indifference of British officers combating with the tender and more amiable feelings of human nature, that I myself, (says Mr. Lander) could with difficulty stifle my emotion, and, to dispel the gloom which hung upon my mind, I bade the officers a hasty and respectful adieu, and shaking hands with many of the honest seamen on deck, I sprang into a canoe that lay along-side the Brazen, and as two of the natives were rowing it towards the shore I took the opportunity of playing

'Over the hills and far away,'

on a small bugle horn which I had brought with me. This elicited the admiration of the sailors of the ship, and I landed amidst the hearty cheers and acclamations of them all."

No English boat or a canoe of the ordinary form can possibly live, even a single minute, in the dreadful surf that rolls along the shore, and the natives have canoes of singular construction, and exceedingly strong. They are of immense thickness, and manned, sometimes by nineteen men, who are well skilled in the art of rowing. On every oe-

casion, a fetish man, covered from head to foot with gris gris, (a sort of charm or amulet made of leather,) stands in the bow, invoking the spirit of the waters to be propitious, and quell the raging of the sea. He continues alternately watching the motion of the billows, and praying in a low mournful tone, till the boat reaches the shore, when thanks are immediately returned to the water-divinity. When he fancies his petition has been heard, the fetish man, catching a favourable opportunity, suddenly claps his hands in a transport, and exclaims, with violent gesticulation and wildness of manner, 'i yaw, i yaw,' (now is the time, now is the time) which inspires his countrymen in the canoe with fresh energy, and dashing the padddles into the water, they propel their enormous bark through the foaming waves with incredible swiftness.

The travellers being all safely landed they proceeded into the interior of the country accompanied by my kind friend Mr. Houtson, who left them at Katunga, and returned to the coast; where, almost immediately on his arrival, he was seized with the fever, and expired after an illness of only a few days. One by one the others dropped off,

and at last the party was reduced to Mr. Lander alone, who was a solitary being among a race of selfish, perfidious, and barbarous strangers, in the interior of a country 115 days' journey from the sea coast. After surmounting innumerable obstacles, and experiencing the most painful privations, he arrived at Badagry, and like myself, after waiting for some time, fell in with a vessel. His feelings on again seeing his countrymen, and gaining his liberty, accord so much with my own when in similar circumstances that I feel pleasure in quoting them.

"My heart bounded within me at the sight of the proud banner of my country streaming from the stately mast of the 'Maria,' and a signal being made, a boat was without loss of time, despatched to my assistance.

"I was soon on the water; and as the little bark moved slowly towards the ship, although my appearance was pitiable in the extreme, the yards were instantly ordered to be manned, and three tremendous cheers from the throats of British seamen, welcomed me once more to the dear society of my gallant countrymen. This was

ravishing melody to my ears; it was the happiest and most rapturous moment of my life. I hastily climbed the sides of the vessel, and springing delighted upon the conscious deck, returned thanks to the Almighty for my preservation, and shook hands heartily with the captain and crew. But, as sudden and violent transport is seldom lasting, and I could not help reflecting a very few minutes afterwards, how different, how very different had been my feelings in the same place about two years before. As a noble tree growing in strength and flourishing in beauty, is suddenly blasted by lightning, which scathes the verdant foliage, and destroys the vital principle, even so had I seen a party of British officers, proud of their native rocks, wither and die. They had planted their feet on African soil, full of fine spirit and noble enthusiasm, scoffing at peril, and determined to overcome every human obstacle that might arrest their progress in the accomplishment of their hazardous undertaking; that great object of their ambition, to which the eyes of millions were directed. A few months only had elapsed when

their elevated hopes and buoyant feelings were quenched in darkness, their manly frames shrivelled like the tree, from irremediable causes, till, unable long to drag their slow length along, they had languished and fallen, and the sound of their voices was heard no more. They had resigned their burden of life, sorrow, and suffering, and were transplanted to that unknown country, where 'the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.'"

I must now return more immediately to my own narrative. The foregoing extracts from the work of the only survivor of that mission, will give a faint outline of the subsequent history and fate of those gentlemen, who treated me with so much kindness on board the prize; and did everything in their power to alleviate my suffering in my distressed and lone situation; little indeed did I then think, that hereafter, I should have to record in my simple narrative the deaths of all the party.*

* Since this was written, information has been received of the death of Mr. Lander; in a subsequent expedition he was shot by the natives, or Portuguese.

On the 30th of November, we set sail for Sierra Leone, in the slave ship (Nimfa,) which had been captured by the Brazen, with her cargo of two hundred and thirty-one emancipated slaves.

The coast of Sierra Leone, is on the whole singularly picturesque; trees in great number and variety, of magnificent dimensions and luxuriant foliage, adorn the face of the country; the apparent beauty of which, is infinitely heightened by the number of small villages embellished with lovely trees, dotting the borders of the sea, amongst which the stately palm, both on account of its peculiarity and elegance, must ever hold a distinguished place. Thick forests are also spread over the landscape, the gloomy shade of which, contrasted with the smiling verdure of cultivated plains pleasantly studded with clumps of cocoa and other trees, and enlightened by a brilliant sun; a variegated and unrivalled picture of rural beauty, which the eye feasts upon with peculiar pleasure.

On the 26th of December I joined the "Lively," at Sierra Leone, and after a passage of fifty-eight days arrived at Plymouth.

It will be needless to spin out the thread of this narrative longer; suffice it to say, that after an absence of six years, during which time I suffered the most extreme hardships and severest privations; the foregoing being only a very small portion of the history of my disasters after leaving my native country. I at length again beheld the snowy cliffs of "that happy island in the watery waste;" my feelings at that moment may be imagined, but cannot be described; the heart leaping with joy in hope of meeting all those dear friends whom I left behind, then fluttering with anxiety at the thought of how many might be missing of that number. These, and similar emotions, have arisen in the breasts of all persons when under similar circumstances; to my readers I leave the task of picturing the state of my feelings, on again seeing England's shores, as well as the increasing anxiety of my mind when I approached the still (to me) dearer shores of Plymouth, nearer and nearer. The well known spots so familiar to me, familiar, even after so long an absence, burst one by one on my

vision, and seemed to hail and welcome my return to the scenes of early days and pleasing recollections.

> "Quickly of memory's fount I drank,
> And brought the past all back again."

In a few hours after opening upon the prospect I had gained, my vessel was safely anchored within that stupendous structure, the breakwater.

The news of my arrival rapidly spread abroad, and I was happy in seeing many of my relatives and friends, who crowded in boats around the vessel, with voices of the most welcome congratulation.

I found that I had long been given "up for lost," by my anxious friends, no news of me having arrived for such a lapse of time. Their joy therefore was almost as unbounded as it was unlooked for.

I must here, however, mention that, although returned in safety and blest with meeting almost all that I parted from, yet I soon felt my constitution suffering from the effects of my

hardships and the sudden change of climate, so that in the midst of my joy I had great reason for humiliation. The effects of this change I have subsequently felt at times most severely, and shall doubtless ever continue to experience to the day of my death.

I prepared to set my foot once more on the shores where I had roved when my hopes were bouyant and my frame vigorous. On leaving the vessel, my heart exulted within me, and as the men were urging on the boat over the green waves, I almost involuntarily exclaimed

> "Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
> Who never to himself has said,
> This is my own, my native land!
> Whose heart has ne'er within him burn'd,
> As home his footsteps he has turn'd,
> From wandering on a foreign strand?"—

Cold indeed would be my heart, if after the signal interposition of an all wise and all merciful Providence, I should fail to record my gratitude to Almighty God, in closing this narrative. Inadequate as I feel to the duty of

expressing my thanksgiving to Him, who has preserved my going out and coming in; yet when I remember that a grateful heart is all that he requires; I do feel it a privilege to have this opportunity of telling the world my joy, and here no language can better convey the emotions of my soul, than the beautiful and truly descriptive words of the king of Israel in the 107th Psalm.

"They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way, they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them; then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distress.

"Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto the desired haven.

"O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and his wonderful works to the children of men."

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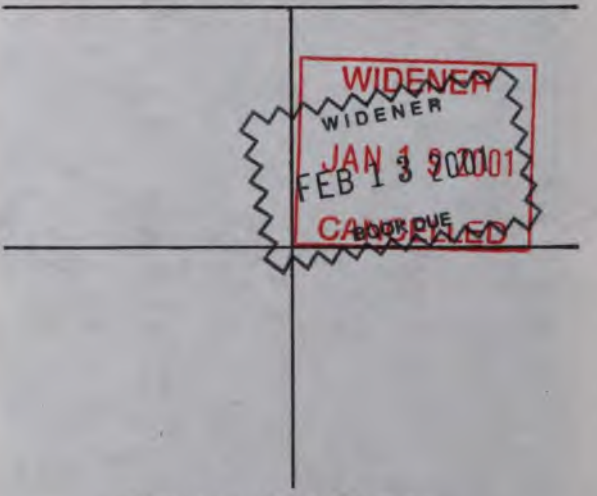

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